BLACK GATE

the black gate does not wait for the soul to die

TOKYOPOP

VOL. 1-3

Yukiko Sumiyoshi

Yukiko Sumiyoshi

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BLACK GATE

the black gate does not wait for the soul to die

By Yukiko Sumiyoshi

BLACK CAT
Black cats do not wait for the soul to die
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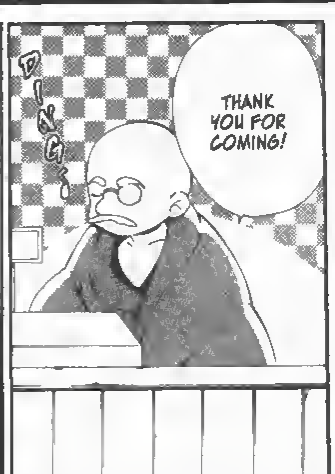
ONE. PATH OF THE LITTLE ONES.
IS A PERSON'S LIFE...SET IN STONE?
TWO. PATH OF THE SPECTER.
ZZZT
THREE ...

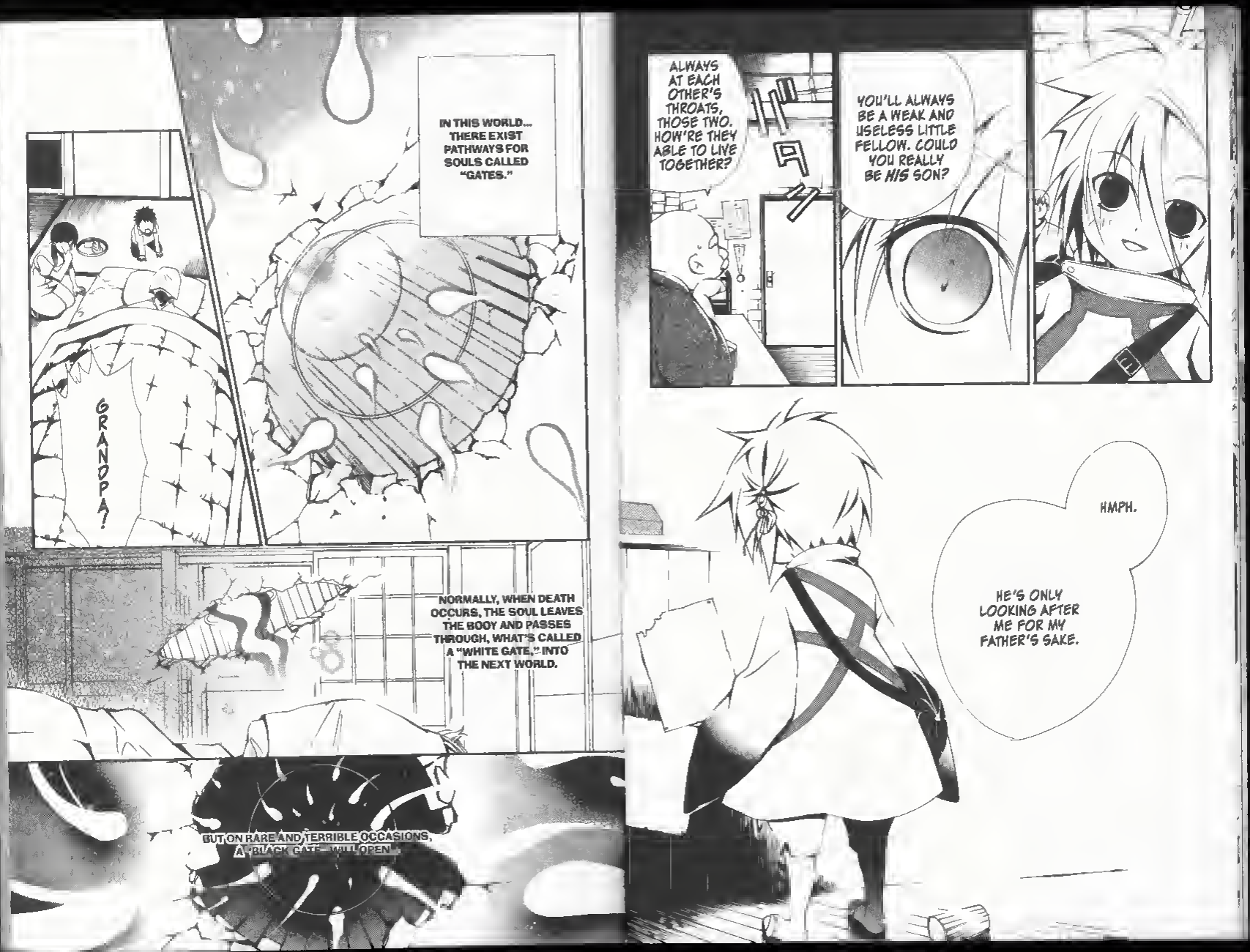
BIT LOW, ISN'T IT?
ANY CHANCE YOU COULD RAISE THAT NUMBER?
THAT'S NOT EVEN ENOUGH TO SETTLE MY HUNGER PANGS.
NO CAN DO! THE GATE YOU SEALED WAS QUITE SMALL.
Senju

GATE BE SEALED!

LET'S SEE NOW... YOU SEALED THE GATE IN ARAKAWA, TOKYO SO...
THAT'LL BE 300 YEN.


DING
THANK YOU FOR COMING!

THAT'S ENOUGH! GIVE IT UP, SENJU!
IF IT'S MONEY YOU'RE AFTER, IT WOULD BE EASIER TO SLAY THIS BALD FOOL AND SNATCH IT.
Hijiri
IF YOU CAN'T SETTLE THIS, WOULD YOU MIND IF I GIVE IT A SHOT?
BE MY GUEST.
BUT ONLY IF YOU BOW DEEPLY AND BEG, "PLEASE HIJIRI-SAMA!"
HA HA HA HA
SORRY TO CAUSE YOU TROUBLE... I'LL ACCEPT THE MONEY.
WEAK!
GUH... NGHH... YOU!
GLANCE


IN THIS WORLD... THERE EXIST PATHWAYS FOR SOULS CALLED "GATES."
GRANDPA?
NORMALLY, WHEN DEATH OCCURS, THE SOUL LEAVES THE BODY AND PASSES THROUGH, WHAT'S CALLED A "WHITE GATE," INTO THE NEXT WORLD.
BUT ON RARE AND TERRIBLE OCCASIONS, A "BLACK GATE" WILL OPEN.
ALWAYS AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS, THOSE TWO. HOW'RE THEY ABLE TO LIVE TOGETHER?
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A WEAK AND USELESS LITTLE FELLOW. COULD YOU REALLY BE HIS SON?
HMPH.
HE'S ONLY LOOKING AFTER ME FOR MY FATHER'S SAKE.

A RARE AND ELITE PROFESSION UNDERTAKEN ONLY BY THOSE HUMANS WITH THE INHERENT ABILITY TO SEE AND CLOSE GATES.
CLOSE

LUCKILY, AMONG US THERE ARE A FEW WITH THE POWER TO CLOSE THESE "BLACK GATES" AND STOP THE FLOW OF STOLEN SOULS. THESE INDIVIDUALS ARE CALLED... "MITEDAMASHI"
NOT CONTENT TO DRAW IN MERELY THE SOULS OF THE DEAD, THESE "BLACK GATES" TRY TO VIOLENTLY EXTRACT THE SOULS FROM BODIES STILL ALIVE.
IN THEIR HUNGER FOR MORE SOULS, THESE GATES START DEADLY ACCIDENTS SUCH AS MYSTERIOUS FIRES AND OTHER UNEXPLAINABLE DISASTERS, ALL TO DEVOUR THE SOULS OF LIVING HUMANS.

I HATE ONIONS.
HEY! MY ONIONS.
わっしょん
HEH HEH HEH
SORRY, I'M BUSY. I HAVE TO BE HEADING OUT FOR THAT JOB.
STOP PUTTING ON AIRS, YOU BUM! EVEN IF YOU GET DOWN AND BEG, YOU WON'T SELL A THING.
YOU IDIOT! NOW I HAVE TO PUSH THESE ON THE GROCER!
HIJIRI.

THAT YOUNG MAN FROM APARTMENT 21 ...ALWAYS SO PROTECTIVE.
CURFEW IS FIVE O'CLOCK! IF YOU'RE EVEN ONE MINUTE LATE, NO DINNER FOR YOU.

JINGLE
BUT...
...SURPRISINGLY, THEY DON'T MAKE MUCH MONEY.
LOOKS LIKE ANOTHER DAY EATING BEEF BOWLS.

SENJU!
CHECK IT OUT! IF YOU PLANT THE ENDS OF ONIONS, THEY'LL GROW AGAIN!

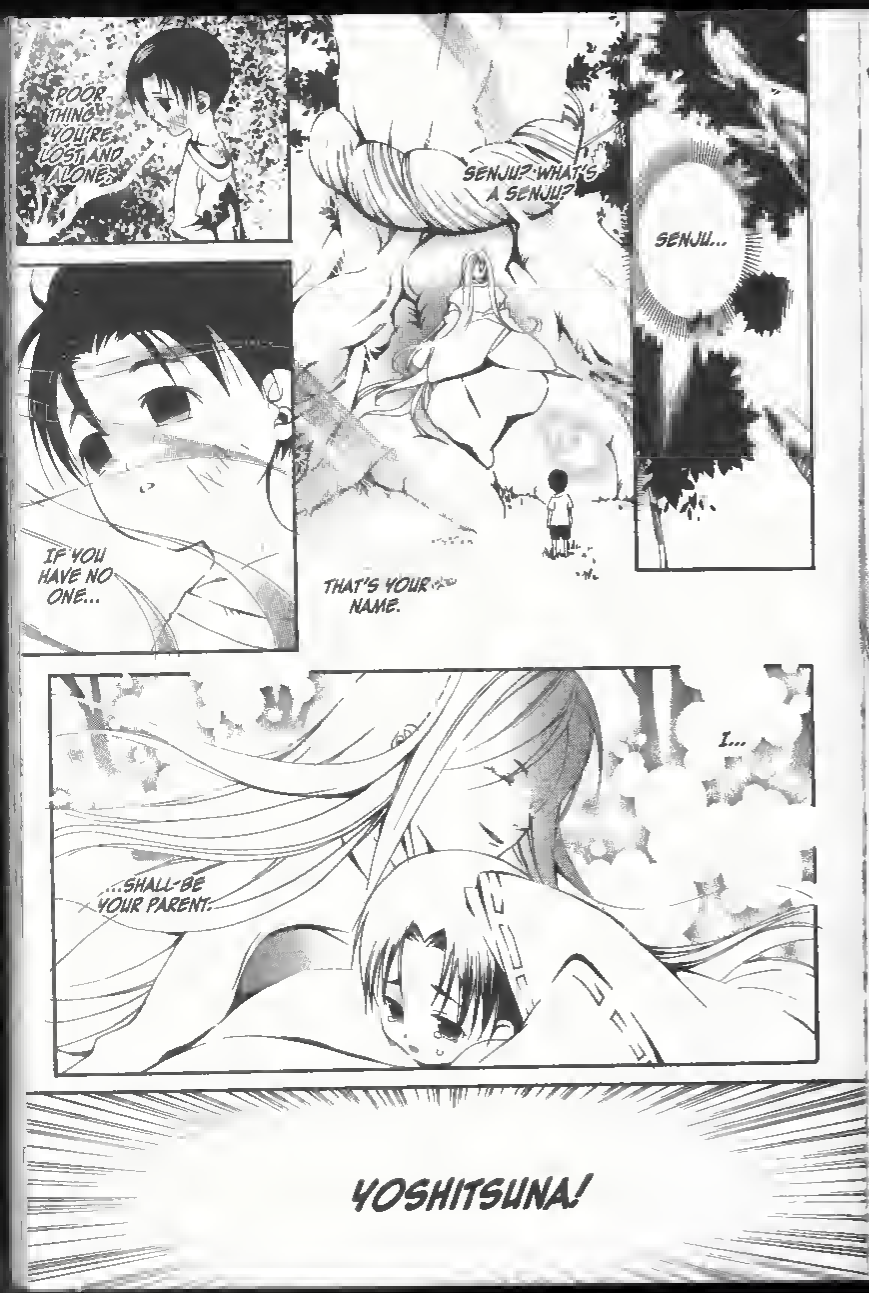
HM?
EVENING ALREADY?
BETTER BE HEADING HOME.
THAT'S...
...A BLACK GATE OPENING!
!
HANG ON!
IF WE WAIT FOR THE GATE TO OPEN WIDER BEFORE WE CLOSE IT...
THE GATE YOU SEALED WAS QUITE SMALL.
THAT'LL BE 300 YEN.
HAVE TO SEAL IT! NEED TO TELL SENJU!
I DON'T RECALL HIM TELLING YOU TO ORDER ME AROUND!
.....
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, HIJIRI. I FORGOT TO TELL YOU...
BECAUSE IF ANYTHING EVER HAPPENS TO YOU, I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO FACE YOSHITSUNA.
MAN, THAT SENJU! RUINING MY BIKE...
Origami don't sell...
HOT PINK.
...YOUR BIKE WAS SO DIRTY AND DINGY, SO I PAINTED IT A CHEERFUL COLOR.
NOOO! MY INARI KING NO. 1, WITH ITS COOL, BLACK CHASSIS. AHHH!

*Inari is a type of sushi. It's rice stuffed into a pocket of sweet fried tofu

LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THAT GATE. I WONDER HOW BIG IT'S GOTTEN?
A FEW DAYS LATER.
HE'S UP TO SOMETHING. I CAN READ IT IN HIS FACE.
HEY.
WHERE ARE WE GOING? I TOLD YOU I HAVE WORK.
RELAX! TRY NOT TO BE SO UPTIGHT FOR ONCE!
YOU WANT TO MAKE THE BIG MONEY, DON'T YOU?

...WE COULD GET WAY MORE MONEY! SENJU'S GOING TO LIKE THE SOUND OF THAT!
FORTY-THREE SECONDS LATE!
YOU'RE LATE! IT'S FORTY-THREE SECONDS PAST FIVE.
...?
WHAT?
NO ONE LIKES A CONTROL FREAK!
NO DINNER FO--
LISTEN UP, SENJU! IN A FEW DAYS YOU'LL BE IN TEARS, THANKING ME!
HUH? THAT GATE-- HIJIRI?!

A FIRE LIKE THIS MEANS IT'S A FAIRLY LARGE GATE. I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW MANY LIVES IT'LL COST.
IT GOT HUGE!
...SAID SOMETHING DAYS AGO.
IF ONLY I...
SLAP!
BLAP!
N-NO.
THERE ARE STILL PEOPLE INSIDE!
FIRE!
THE FIRE DEPART-MENT'S STILL NOT HERE?


POOR THING... YOU'RE LOST AND ALONE...
SENJU? WHAT'S A SENJU?
SENJU...
IF YOU HAVE NO ONE...
THAT'S YOUR NAME.
I...
...SHALL BE YOUR PARENT.
YOSHITSUNA!

SENJU, I...
JUST HOW MUCH MORE DO YOU INTEND TO DISGRACE YOSHITSUNA?
YOU KNEW ABOUT IT, AND DIDN'T SAY ANY-THING?
YOU WANT ME TO BE LIKE FATHER, BUT I KNOW I CAN'T.
YOU...

SORRY, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE DYING ON THE JOB.
I DON'T HANDLE JOBS THAT RISKY. I LEAVE THAT TO THE MITEDA-MASHI WHO GO FOR THE BIG BUCKS.
THOSE FLAMES ARE TOO DANGEROUS NOW.
GO BACK?
FOR-GET IT, LET'S GO BACK.
I...
...WON'T TURN MY BACK ON THE DISASTER I CREATED.
HEH... IT'S SO LIKE YOU TO SAY SOMETHING SO COLD-BLOODED.
BUT...

I UN-DERSTAND, YOSHITSUNA.
SENJU... I WON'T BE ALIVE FOREVER, SO...
I WILL... PROTECT YOUR CHILD.
HEH...TO SENJU, I'M THE MUD THAT SMEARS MY FATHER'S NAME.
THE FATHER WHO RAISED SENJU...WAS PERFECT TO THE ABSOLUTE END.

LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE...
HANG IN THERE FOR ME!
HE'S STILL BREATHING.
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME?!
IT'S TOO LATE TO BE SCARED!
Huff
Huff
W-WOAAH!
!!
I... WON'T... DIE...LIKE THIS.

!!
HIJIRI?!
!
ANYONE HERE?! ANSWER ME!
IF THERE ARE PEOPLE INSIDE, I'VE GOT TO SAVE THEM!
COUGH

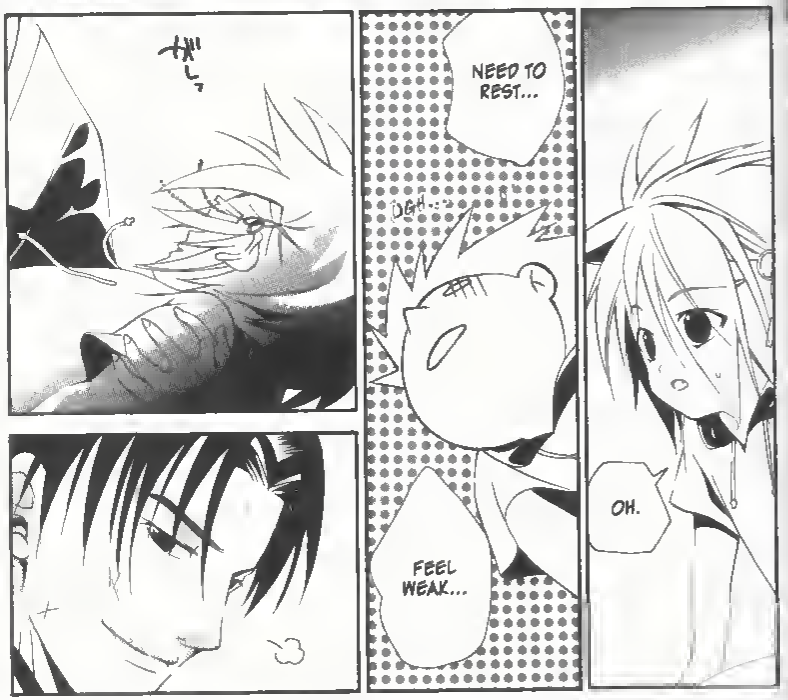
I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP!
WHY WON'T YOU GO AWAY?!
GO!
L-LET GO OF ME!
JUST BECAUSE YOU GAVE YOUR WORD? YOU'LL GO THAT FAR FOR MY FATHER'S SAKE?!
I'M... NOT MY FATHER!
WHY?
WHY ARE YOU PROTECTING ME?!
JUMPING IN HERE LIKE THAT! WHAT'RE YOU THINKING?!
THAT'S... MY LINE...
!!
DAMMIT!

YOU'RE FAMILY, AND FAMILY IS PRE-CIOUS.
SEALING THAT GATE IS THE ONLY WAY TO STOP THESE FLAMES AND SAVE OUR SOULS
WE'RE SURROUND-ED BY FLAMES.
WHILE WE'RE IN HERE, WE'RE IN DANGER! OUR SOULS COULD GET SUCKED INTO THAT GATE!
YOU FOOL...

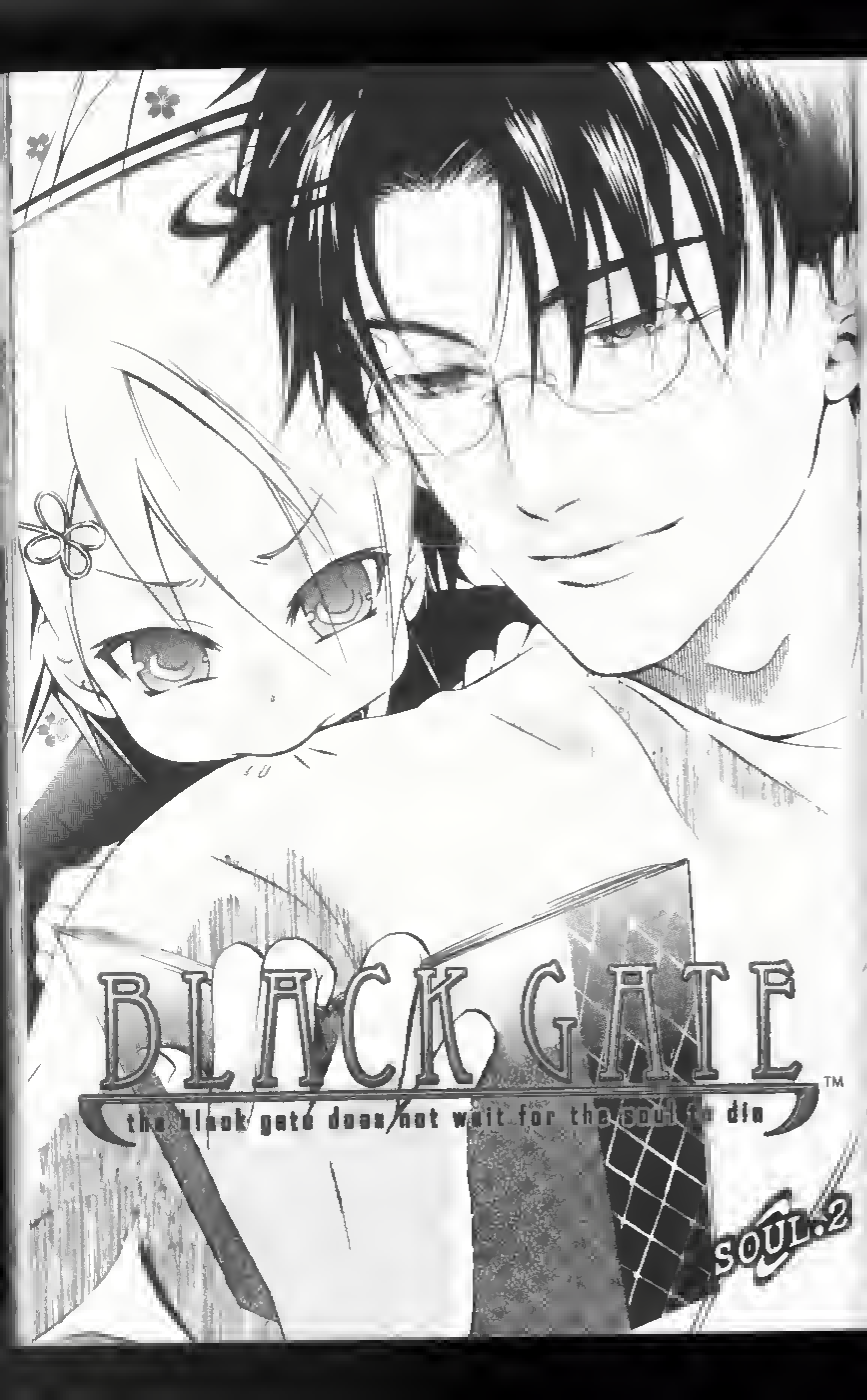
YOU'LL ALWAYS BE A WEAK AND USELESS FELLOW.
BUT I DON'T WANT YOU TO STAY THAT WAY!
YOU THINK I'D RISK MY LIFE IF YOU WEREN'T STILL ALIVE?!
CURFEW IS FIVE O'CLOCK!
I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TERRIBLE TO HAPPEN TO YOU.
IT'S FOR THOSE REASONS... I CAN'T DIE.
SORRY, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE DYING ON THE JOB.
EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NOT RELATED, EVEN IF I HADN'T MADE ANY PRO-MISES TO YOUR FATHER...

ONE. PATH OF THE LITTLE ONES.
TWO. PATH OF THE SPECTER.
THREE. THAT PLACE BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.
GATE BE SEALED!
ABOVE YOU! TAKE A LOOK!
WHA?
ABOVE YOU.
JINGLE
IF I CAN SEAL IT NOW, WE MIGHT STILL...
!!
...LIVE!
THERE'S THE GATE! RIGHT ABOVE THE HOLE IN THE CEILING!

THE FLAMES ARE ALL OUT. THE GATE IS SEALED. AND THIS BOY'S LIFE IS SAVED.

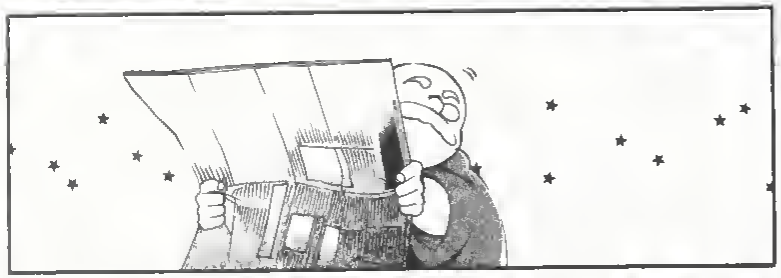

NEED TO REST...
OH...
FEEL WEAK...
OH.

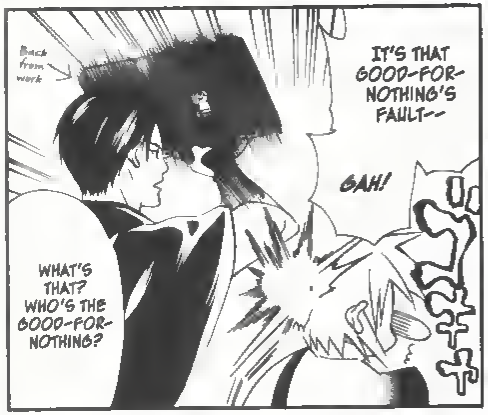
A COMPLETE FAILURE, I'M AFRAID.
YOU'RE QUITE THE USELESS BRAT, AREN'T YOU?
SE-SENJU...
ARE YOU READY FOR WHAT'S COMING?
EHH!
JEEZ.
.....
THANK YOU. THAT'LL GET YOU 200 YEN.
YOU HEARD RIGHT. 200 YEN.
200 YEN?!
ARE YOU RUNNING A SCAM HERE OR WHAT?
SINCE NO ONE DIED DUE TO HIS MISCHIEF, I'LL LOOK THE OTHER WAY THIS TIME.
OH, DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW...ABOUT THAT RASCAL OF YOURS LETTING A GATE GET LARGER AND LARGER.
YOU'RE LUCKY I'M NOT CHARGING YOU A HEAVY FINE.
GLAD THAT'S OVER.


BLACK GATE™
the black gate does not wait for the soul to die
SOUL.2

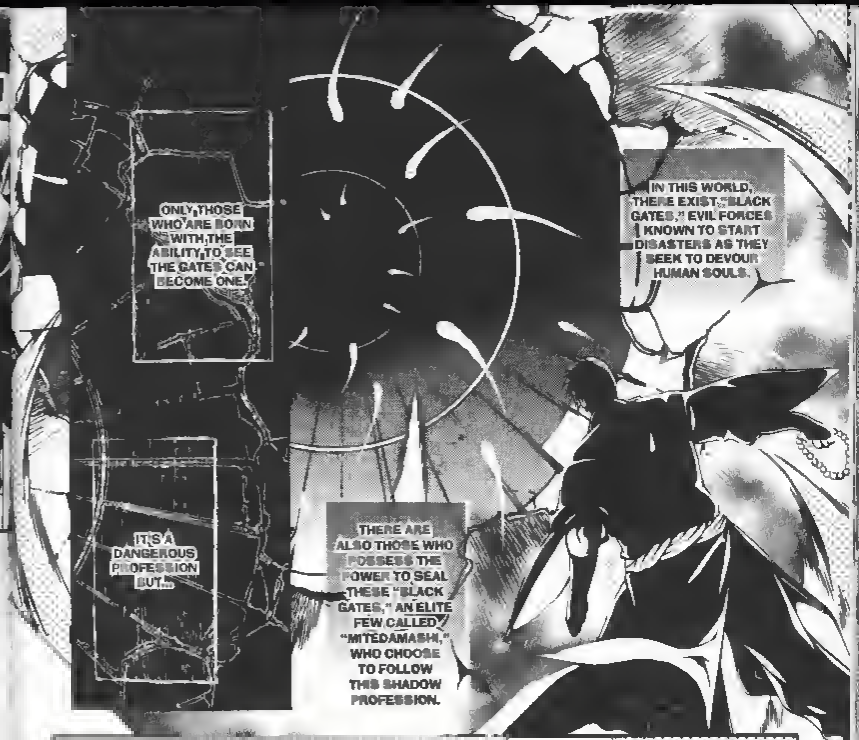
SENJU.
SENJU... I WON'T BE ALIVE FOREVER.
SO BEFORE I DIE... PROMISE ME...
I WILL... PROTECT YOUR CHILD.
I UNDERSTAND, YOSHITSUNA!
NO, SENJU.
FEEL BOUND TO NOTHING. LIVE YOUR OWN LIFE FREELY, WITHOUT RESTRAINTS.
I'LL PROTECT YOUR CHILD...
...JUST AS I WISH!
YOSHITSUNA.
LIVE AS YOU DESIRE.
FROM THE START, THERE NEVER WAS A "PROMISE."

FOOD OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
HEY, GRAMPS.
I'LL MAKE AN EXCEPTION AND GRANT YOU THE PRIVILEGE OF PAYING TRIBUTE TO ME. FOR EXAMPLE...




Back from work
IT'S THAT GOOD-FOR-NOTHING'S FAULT--
GAH!
WHAT'S THAT? WHO'S THE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING?

IT'S BEEN THREE DAYS ALREADY.
YOU HAVEN'T BEEN EATING?

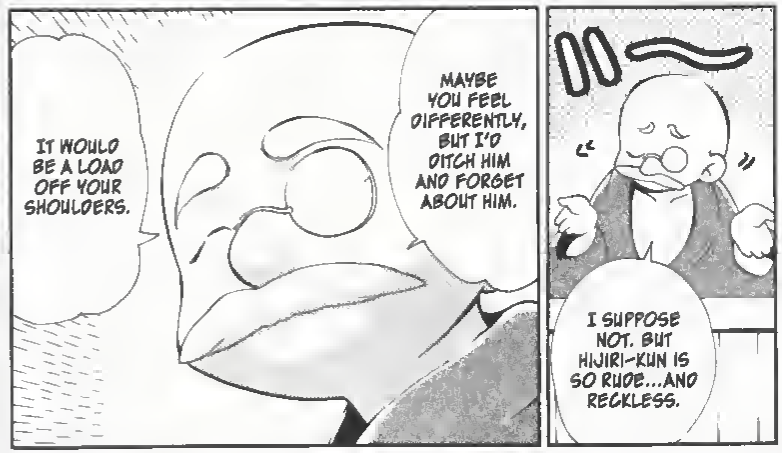

ONLY THOSE WHO ARE BORN WITH THE ABILITY TO SEE THE GATES CAN BECOME ONE.
IT'S A DANGEROUS PROFESSION BUT...
IN THIS WORLD, THERE EXIST "BLACK GATES," EVIL FORCES KNOWN TO START DISASTERS AS THEY SEEK TO DEVOUR HUMAN SOULS.
THERE ARE ALSO THOSE WHO POSSESS THE POWER TO SEAL THESE "BLACK GATES," AN ELITE FEW CALLED "MITEDAMASHI," WHO CHOOSE TO FOLLOW THIS SHADOW PROFESSION.

Hates his job
IT'S NOT ONE THAT PAYS ENOUGH TO BUY MANY MEALS.
I'LL BUY IT. ♡
THIS TIME I'LL BE INTRODUCING A WATER FILTER.

HA HA HA. NO DOUBT.
I'LL CONSIDER IT.
Scary...
YOU ADMIT THAT HE'S BAGGAGE BUT...
...YOU'RE ANNOYED WHEN OTHER PEOPLE TELL YOU AS MUCH. STRANGE FELLOW.
STILL, BAGGAGE IS BAGGAGE... WITHOUT IT I'M TRAVELING TOO LIGHT
SEE YA.

STUPID! STUPID! YOU... WITH YOUR HAIR ALL PARTED IN THE MIDDLE! I WON'T FORGET THIS!
Hair parted in the middle?
YOU'VE GOT PROBLEMS.
DAMN... THAT...
I CAME TO COLLECT MONEY.
UGHHH...
SURE THING HERE'S 500 YEN.

THAT'S TRUE. OH WELL... HE'S JUST TROUBLESOME BAGGAGE, BUT I DON'T MIND HIM.
SENJU'S ONLY TAKING THE EASIER JOBS FOR YOUR SAKE, HIJIRI.


IT WOULD BE A LOAD OFF YOUR SHOULDERS.
MAYBE YOU FEEL DIFFERENTLY, BUT I'D DITCH HIM AND FORGET ABOUT HIM.
I SUPPOSE NOT. BUT HIJIRI-KUN IS SO RUDE...AND RECKLESS.

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE OFFERINGS?!
I GUESS I'LL GRAB A BOX OF SWEETS.
CAN YOU DO THAT?!
OH, I KNOW WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT NOW.
THIS RAILWAY CROSSING'S BEEN THE SITE OF A LOT OF ACCIDENTS.
MORE AND MORE SUICIDES HAPPEN HERE ALL THE TIME.
BUT COULD A BLACK GATE CAUSE THAT?
I WONDERED THE SAME THING. I THOUGHT A GATE WAS CAUSING ALL THE DEATHS.
BUT...
HEY, WHAT'RE YOU DOING? WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF WORK.
THAT'S RIGHT! THAT SENJU IS A ROYAL PAIN.
YOOW
MEOW
AND HE'S SELFISH TOO.
A RAILWAY CROSSING?
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO FIND IN A PLACE LIKE THIS?
A LOT OF OFFERINGS
WE'RE HERE.
I'M A SANE HUMAN BEING. I DON'T EXPECT TO UNDERSTAND.
ARE YOU JEALOUS BECAUSE YOU CAN'T UNDERSTAND CAT SPEAK?

THAT RAILWAY CROSSING GOT US NOWHERE. WE'VE GOT TO FIND SOME GATES. WE'RE NOT MAKING MONEY.
THE SPIRIT OF AN UNDEAD SUICIDE-VICTIM JUST JUMPED ON YOUR BACK!
Funny
AAAAGH!
I DON'T DETECT A GATE ANYWHERE HERE.
MAYBE I SHOULD QUIT BEING A MITE-DAMASHI
THEN AGAIN, WE WON'T MAKE MUCH MONEY FOR SEALING ONE
First piece of meat in a week
SOME-ONE AS BRAVE AS I WOULD NEVER...
MEOW
IT'S PRO-BABLY JUST A SPIRIT DRAWING PEOPLE TO THESE TRACKS. DID I SCARE YOU?
DON'T BE SILLY.
AAAAGH!
.....
ALSO...
MAN, SENJU! STARTLING ME LIKE THAT!

CHIRP CHIRP
BE CAREFUL.
BARK BARK
BE CAREFUL.
BE CAREFUL.
DING
TAKE CARE.
DING
WHAT THE--
DING
TAKE CARE.
WHY DID I BRING MYSELF BACK HERE, OF ALL PLACES?!
I HAVE TO HURRY THERE AND BACK. BETTER BE OFF!
THE OTHER DAY, THE CAT THAT I MET HERE, WHO I HAVE NAMED "NARI KING NO 5 SAID .
I PLAN TO GIVE BIRTH TO KITTENS SOON, AND I'LL BE LONELY ALL BY MYSELF, SO PLEASE VISIT
Hmm

H-HELP ME! SOMETHING'S PULLING ME INTO THE CROSSING...
WHA... WHAT?
WHAT HAPPENED?

HEY! IT'S DANGEROUS TO GET THAT CLOSE!
!
OH... I GUESS THE TRAIN IS ON ITS WAY. BETTER STEP BACK.
OH...I... THANKS. I TOTALLY SPACED OUT.
?!
WHAT A CARELESS WOMAN.

NOOO
HER BODY IS GETTING PULLED IN. SHE ISN'T TRYING TO COMMIT SUICIDE. THAT MUST MEAN...
HELP ME!
HELLLP!
IT'S ALL RIGHT! I'VE GOT YOU!
NO MISTAKE... A GATE!
GRAB HOLD OF THIS! ALL RIGHT?!
NEED TO FIND THE GATE!!
HAVE TO FIND IT...
WHERE ...
OH MY!
...OUR NEWEST WATER FILTER.
NOW, LET ME DEMON-STRATE...
ALL RIGHT... I'M GETTING THE RIGHT SIGNS FROM THIS CUSTOMER
!
WHAT?!

NOOO!
THERE IT IS... THE GATE! IT'S BEEN HIDDEN INSIDE THE CREVICES OF THAT JIZO STATUE!!

I'M GOING TO MAKE AN EXCEPTION THIS TIME, AND GRANT YOU PERMISSION TO RECEIVE ORDERS FROM ONE AS NOBLE AS MYSELF.
MY APOLOGIES. NOW, I'M GOING TO REPLACE...
SCRAM
YOU READY? NOW LISTEN WELL! IMMEDIATELY...
NUOOOW
CHIRP CHIRP
BARK BARK
INARI GREAT NO. 1! NO. 2! NO. 3!
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
I NEED TO CALL SENJU TO SEAL THE GATE BUT...
I HAVE TO HOLD THAT LADY BACK, OR SHE'S GOING TO GET SUCKED IN!
THAT'S RIGHT! I'M TALKING TO YOU!

H-
HELP!
HEL--
DAMN.
IF I GET FIRED FOR THIS, HIJIRI, IT'LL BE YOUR FAULT!
JUST A LITTLE LONGER!
I'LL EXPLAIN LATER! HURRY AND SEAL THE GATE!
SENJU!
HIJIRI!
GATES?!

THEN AGAIN, HE TOOK THE EXTRA STEP OF SENDING ALL THESE ANIMALS TO ALERT ME. THERE MUST BE MORE TO THIS.
JEEZ... ONLY HIM.
OR RATHER... BECAUSE IT'S HIM, HE'S GOTTEN INTO A MESS HE SHOULDN'T HAVE.
WHA--??
WHAT?! IS HIJIRI BEHIND THIS?
HE'S PROBABLY TRYING TO INFORM ME THAT HE'S FOUND A LARGE GATE.
BUT IT'LL ONLY PAY ME 300 YEN ANYWAY TO SEAL IT.
THIS CUSTOMER IS WORTH MUCH MORE THAN THAT.
NOW THEN, LET'S CONTINUE WITH OUR DEMONSTRATION...

GATE!
BE SEALED!
ONE. PATH OF THE LITTLE ONES.
TWO. PATH OF THE SPEC-TER.
HEY YOU! IT'S OKAY NOW.
NOOO!
NO!
SO IT WAS HERE AFTER ALL?!
THREE. THAT PLACE BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND. SO THE GIRL WAS SAVED?
...ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? WHAT GIRL?
WHO...
SHE DOES INDEED HAVE LONG HAIR.
LONG-HAIRED...
YOU DIDN'T SEE HER?! LONG-HAIRED...

I...COULDN'T... SAVE HER.
HIJIRI.
WHAT HAPPENED?! A PERSON JUST GOT RUN OVER!
WHAT HAPPENED?
SENJU! IF YOU'D ONLY COME SOONER!
YOU CALLED SO SUDDENLY!
WHO GOT RUN OVER? NOTHING HAPPENED AND NO ONE GOT HURT.

THANK YOU...
REST IN PEACE.
SHOULD I QUIT BEING A MITEDAMASHI, OR SHOULD I QUIT MY DAY JOB?
IF I DIDN'T MAKE IT THERE WHEN I DID...
...HIS SOUL WOULD'VE BEEN TAKEN BY THAT GATE.
NOW I GET IT.
THERE ARE SPIRITS THAT LINGER AFTER THEIR BODIES HAVE MET ACCIDENTAL DEATHS. NOT REALIZING THEIR BODIES HAVE DIED, THE SPIRITS KEEP REPEATING THEIR BODIES' FINAL ACTIONS.
WHAT? WAS I ACTUALLY RIGHT?!
Run away
AAAAAAGH!
BUT IT'S OKAY NOW.
THE GATE TRIED TO PULL YOU IN AFTER YOUR BODY DIED, BUT YOU NEVER CROSSED OVER SO YOU BECAME THE GHOST OF A SUICIDE VICTIM
GATE OPEN!

BLACK CAT
SOUL 3

YES. IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE WE MET HERE LAST.

ALL IS WELL?

THAT'S BECAUSE THE "KEEPER" IS ABSENT. BUT THAT'S WELL KNOWN TO US.
HOW TROUBLE-SOME. THIS PLACE IS HOPELESS, AND THERE ARE MORE GATES APPEARING EVERYWHERE.

THE NEXT TIME YOU DO THAT, YOU'RE FIRED!
WE GOT A COMPLAINT! JUST WHAT WERE YOU THINKING?
WHAT NEXT TIME? I QUIT!

YOU LEFT A CUSTOMER AND WENT OFF SOME-WHERE!

HUH?

...I WON'T BE ABLE TO PROTECT SOMEONE VERY DEAR TO ME
IF I KEEP WEARING THIS NECK-TIE...

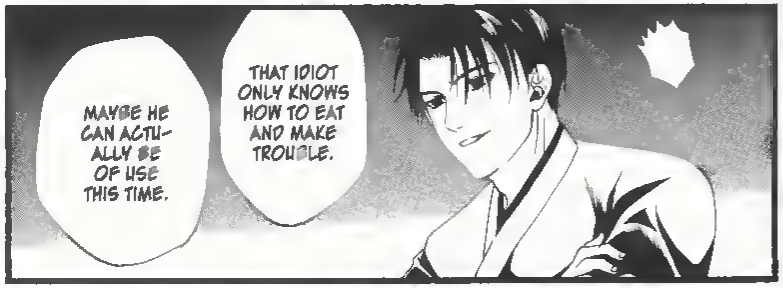
I WON'T TROUBLE YOU ANY-MORE.

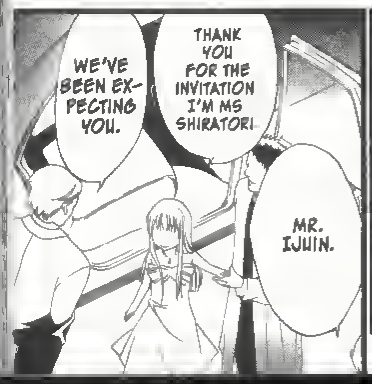
OVER-PROTECTIVE, AREN'T YOU?
BLACK GATE
the black gate does not wait for the soul to ...
SOUL.3

I'M GOING TO HIT THE SHOWERS.
I WORKED UP A SWEAT AFTER MY LAST JOB.
HAVE YOU TOLD HIJIRI-KUN ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED HERE?
HE'S STILL A CHILD.
HE DOESN'T KNOW ANYTHING RIGHT NOW.

HEY-HEY, SENJU.
HOW'S BUSI-NESS? MAKING MONEY?
YOU KNOW I'M NOT, SO DON'T ASK.
I'VE GOT A GOOD LEAD ON A JOB.
WANNA HEAR IT?
GOOD LEAD?
SE-SENJU?
WH-WHAT'S THIS? WHAT HAPPEN-ED?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
ピ
ピンポーン
ガチャガチャ
?!

JUST WHAT DO YOU TAKE HIJIRI-KUN FOR?
NO SCRU-PLES, MAN!
THAT'S AWFUL, SENJU!
WHAT THE HELL?


MAYBE HE CAN ACTU-ALLY BE OF USE THIS TIME.
THAT IDIOT ONLY KNOWS HOW TO EAT AND MAKE TROUBLE.

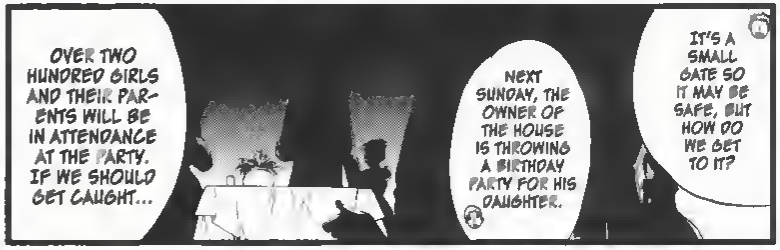

WE'VE BEEN EX-PECTING YOU.
THANK YOU FOR THE INVITATION I'M MS SHIRATORI
MR. IJUIN.

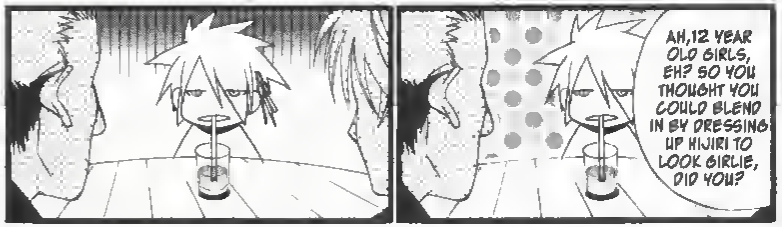
ALSO ...

WHAT'RE YOU GUYS SAYING?
TRUE. HE'S GOT A POINT.

HMM.
...THAT A SMALL GATE HAS APPEARED INSIDE THE MANSION OF A VERY WEALTHY GENTLEMAN.
IT'S COME TO MY ATTEN-TION...
GOING UNDER-COVER IN DRAG?!

IT'S SAFE, BUT IT'S A HIGH-VALUE TARGET WITH A HIGH DEGREE OF DIFFICULTY.
HOWEVER, THE SECUR-ITY IS TIGHT, AND IT'LL BE TOUGH TO GET OURSELVES IN.


OVER TWO HUNDRED GIRLS AND THEIR PAR-ENTS WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE AT THE PARTY. IF WE SHOULD GET CAUGHT...
NEXT SUNDAY, THE OWNER OF THE HOUSE IS THROWING A BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR HIS DAUGHTER.
IT'S A SMALL GATE SO IT MAY BE SAFE, BUT HOW DO WE GET TO IT?


AH, 12 YEAR OLD GIRLS, EH? SO YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD BLEND IN BY DRESSING UP HIJIRI TO LOOK GIRLIE, DID YOU?

THAT SO?
LOST IT.
UMM... I'M SORRY, BUT DO YOU HAVE YOUR INVITATION?
SUZUKI.
THANK YOU FOR THE INVITE. I'M MR. SUZUKI.
I DON'T RECALL INVITING A SUZUKI.
SMITHERS!
THESE ARE MY FRIENDS.
MR. SUZUKI.
COME ON IN.
?
SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT. NO, THIS ISN'T RIGHT AT ALL.
THEY'RE DEFINITELY SUSPECT. SHOULD I CALL THE POLICE?
And if that's a girl I'll eat my shorts!

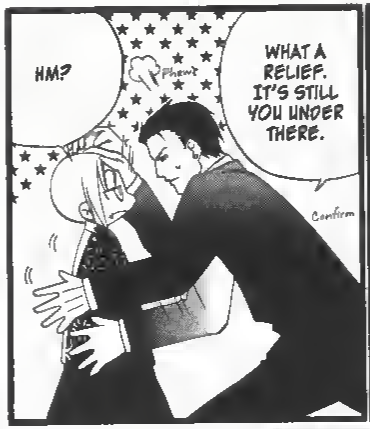
THERE'S NO WAY THIS IS GOING TO WORK!
Hand sewn by Senju
Rental
HEY, SENJU.
ALL RIGHT, WE'RE IN.
Gulp
YUP.
CRAP.
LET'S DO THIS. TODAY, WE ARE THE SUZUKIS.
WHY COULDN'T HE LOOK ME IN THE FACE WHEN HE SAID THAT?
YOU LOOK ADORABLE. JUST RELAX.

?
YOU KNOW WHAT? A JAPANESE OUTFIT WOULD BE PERFECT FOR YOU.
AND WE MUST DO SOMETHING WITH THAT AWFUL HAIR.
I DIDN'T EXPECT A KID AS FUNNY AS THIS WOULD SHOW UP. EH HEH HEH! GIVES ME A CHANCE TO HAVE SOME FUN.
WHAT'S HE UP TO?
QUIT CHIT-CHATTING. WE'VE GOT TO FIND THAT GATE.
WH-WHY DID YOU LET US IN? WE'VE NEVER EVEN MET BEFORE.
SNORT...
MY LADY-- YE--
YES!
YOUR OUTFIT... DOESN'T MATCH... SO FUNNY...AND YOU'RE SUPER TINY! ARE YOU REALLY TWELVE?!
TH-THE NERVE OF THIS GIRL!
WAH HA HA HA HA HA HA!
WAH HA HA HA HA
SIGH... IT'S A PARTY, SO WHO CARES?
AND, BY THE WAY, NONE OF MY "FRIENDS" CAME THESE ARE ALL THE DAUGHTERS OF MY DADDY'S FRIENDS.

CRASH!
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG LADY.
WHOSE DAUGHTER MIGHT YOU BE?
BI
S
ALMOST FAINTED.
!!
WHAT THE HELL? WHY'S EVERYONE LOOKING AT ME?
JUST AS I THOUGHT, THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG WITH ME AFTER ALL.

HOW'D IT GO?
NO LUCK.
I GUESS WE HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO SPLIT UP AND SEARCH.
GUESS SO.

WHOA!
!
EEK!
!
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
HA HA...I JUST CUT MY HAND A LITTLE.


HM?
WHAT A RELIEF. IT'S STILL YOU UNDER THERE.
Confirm

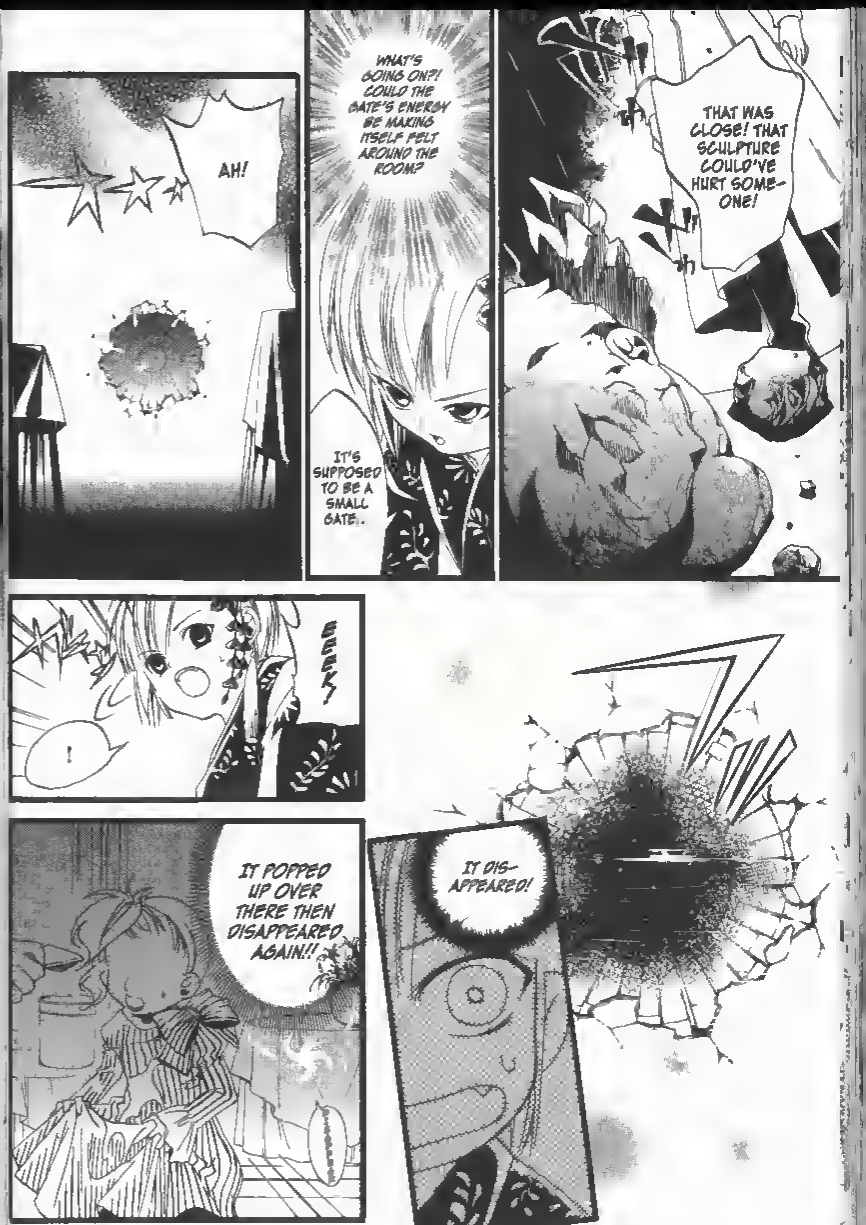
I FEEL REALLY WEIRD. I WISH EVERYONE WOULD QUIT STARING.
SENJU!

WELL, ALL RIGHT THEN. PLAYING DRESS-UP IS OVER.

A PLACE AS BIG AS THIS, ALL THESE PEOPLE AROUND.
IT WON'T BE EASY TO FIND A SMALL GATE.

A "MOVING GATE"...

UNLESS I CAN GET AHEAD OF IT, I WON'T BE ABLE TO CATCH IT. HOW CAN WE SEAL IT?!
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?! NOT ONLY IS IT SMALL, BUT IT'S ZIPPING ALL OVER THE ROOM.
DO YOU KNOW WHY I HAVE TO BE NICE AND HANG OUT AT THIS PARTY?
HE WANTS TO TRY AND GET IN GOOD WITH SOME POTENTIAL INVESTORS.
HE SAID, "OUR COMPANY...TO BE HONEST, ISN'T DOING WELL."
FOR MY DAD.


AH!
WHAT'S GOING ON?! COULD THE GATE'S ENERGY BE MAKING ITSELF FELT AROUND THE ROOM?
IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE A SMALL GATE!.
THAT WAS CLOSE! THAT SCULPTURE COULD'VE HURT SOMEONE!
EEEK!
!
IT POPPED UP OVER THERE THEN DISAPPEARED AGAIN!!
IT DISAPPEARED!

I NEED...
WORDS WON'T SAVE US. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
WHAT SHOULD I DO?
HUH?
...TO DO SOMETHING!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO PREDICT WHERE THE GATE WILL POP UP AGAIN.

THAT'S WHY NONE OF MY REAL FRIENDS ARE HERE TO CELEBRATE.
おぉ?
IF ANYONE GETS HURT, THIS PARTY COULD GET OUT OF CONTROL.
IT'S ALL RIGHT!

WHAT'S GOING ON? IT'S DOING IT ON ITS OWN!
GATE SEARCH.
SEARCHING.
!
HEY...
COULD IT BE...
!!
AAH...
...AH...
...AH...
...AH...
...AAAH!
COLLAPSE
IN 5 MINUTES... LOCATION, EAST WING. STORAGE ROOM.
THAT'S IT, SENJU!
THAT'S WHERE WE'LL FIND THE GATE!

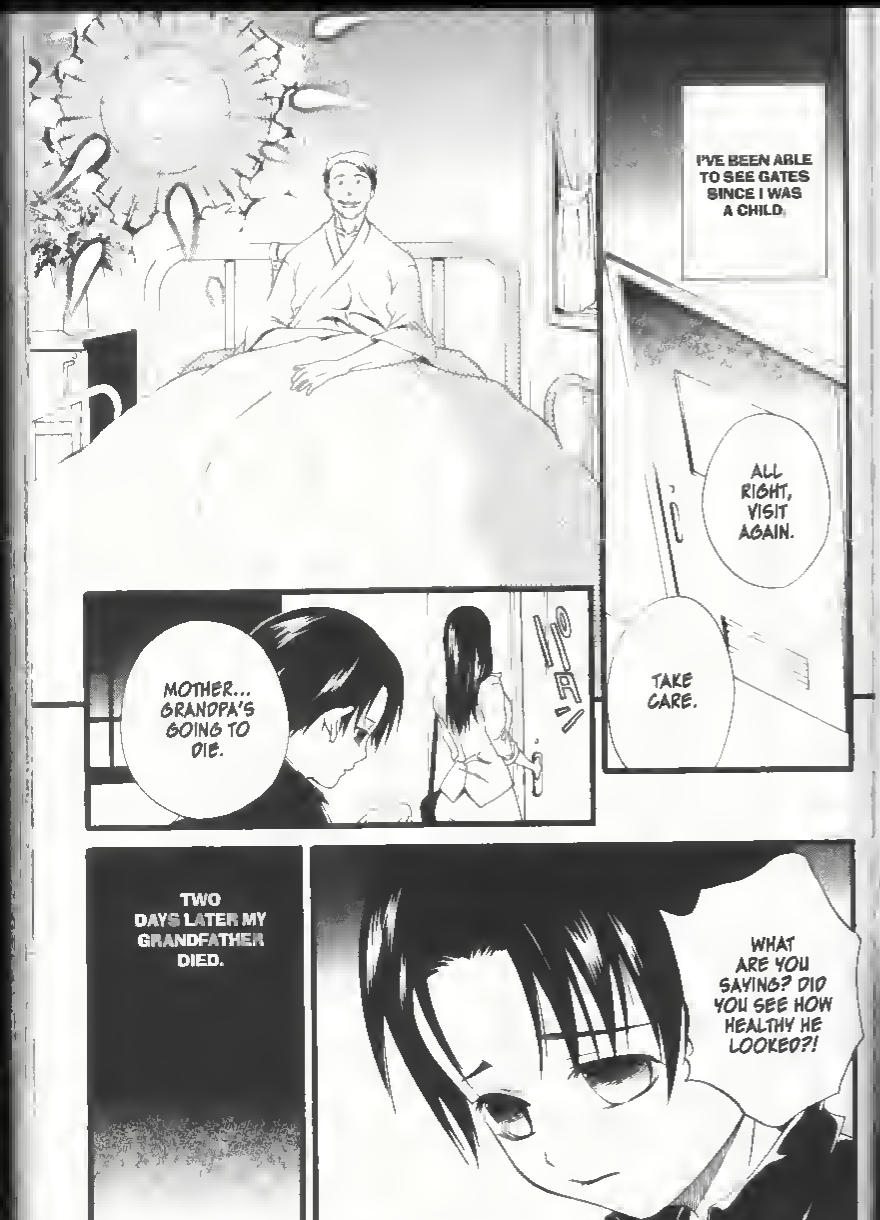
THREE. THAT PLACE BETWEEN THIS WORLD AND THE NEXT.
... PATH OF THE LITTLE ONES.
TWO. PATH OF THE SPECTER.
GATE BE SEALED!
HERE?!
ONE. PATH OF THE ...
IT REALLY IS...HERE.
YOSHITSUNA...
HAS IT ALREADY...

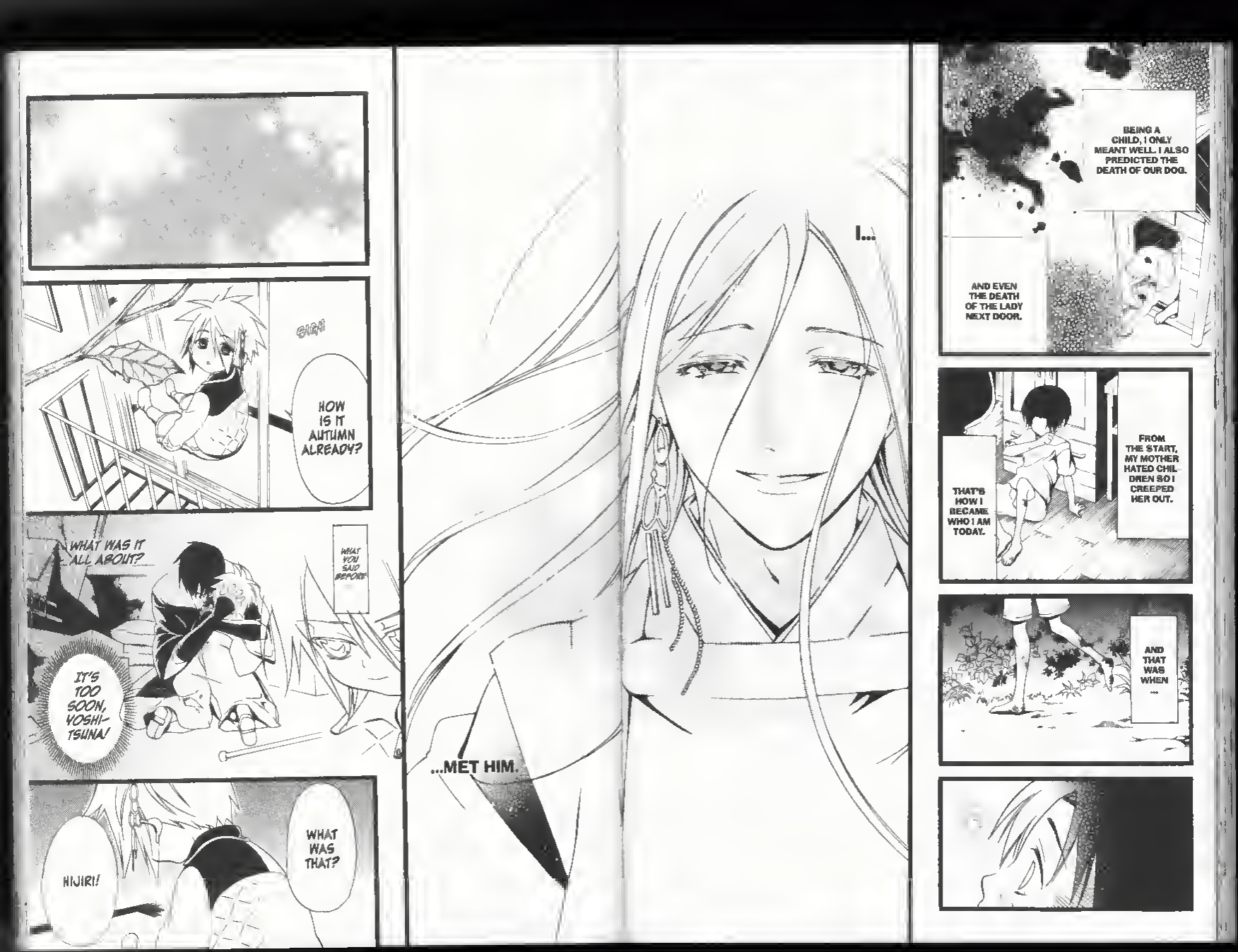
M-MY LADY!
ALL THAT GLASS! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
HUH? NOT A SINGLE CUT?
DID YOU LIKE THAT?!
!
YEAH, YEAH, I KNOW, IT'S OKAY.
THE SCULPTURE FALLING WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

SO I'M CELEBRATING IN THEIR PLACE!
IT WAS A BIRTHDAY PRESENT!
SEEMS YOUR FRIENDS WEREN'T AROUND TO HELP YOU CELEBRATE ...
YOU WENT OUT OF YOUR WAY TO LIE. WHY?
BECAUSE... YOU'RE MY FRIEND ALREADY.
SENJU!
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT AT ALL.
I DID WELL! I SAVED HER! YOU'D BETTER PRAISE ME!
NOT ONLY THAT...
REALLY?
LOOKS LIKE ORDINARY GLASS TO ME, BUT...
THE GLASS WAS A SPECIAL KIND MADE IN AMERICA. IT DOESN'T CAUSE INJURIES.
THAT WAS A TRICK THAT LITTLE MISS AND I THOUGHT UP!
WHAT?!
BUT I'M REALLY A BOY!
SO IT WAS ALL FOR OUR ENTERTAINMENT? WONDERFUL! I EXPECTED NOTHING LESS FROM THE PRESIDENT'S BIRTHDAY GIRL
WILD! YOU HAD ME FOOLED!

STOP IT!
NOH!
IS THE ORDER OF THE WORLD...THAT IMPORTANT?
WHY?
IT'S TOO SOON.
DID YOU HEAR ME?! I MADE A FRIEND!
SEN--
IT'S TOO SOON.
QUIT IT!
SEN... JU?

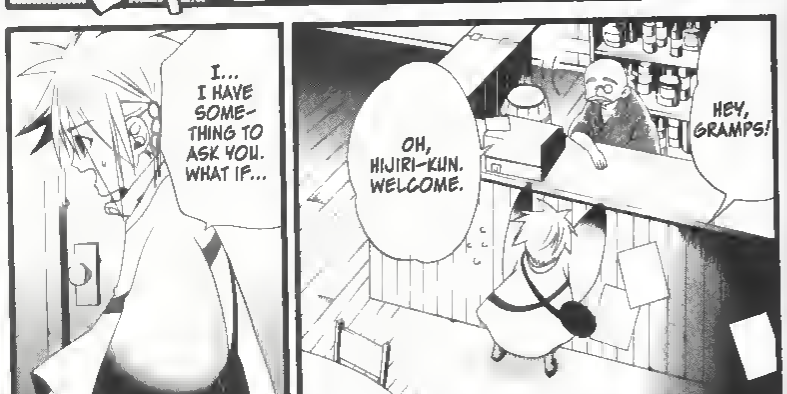
BLACK GATE
the black gate does not wait for the soul to die
SOUL.4
IT'S TOO SOON, YOSHITSUNA!


I'VE BEEN ABLE TO SEE GATES SINCE I WAS A CHILD.
ALL RIGHT, VISIT AGAIN.
TAKE CARE.
MOTHER... GRANDPA'S GOING TO DIE.
TWO DAYS LATER MY GRANDFATHER DIED.
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING? DID YOU SEE HOW HEALTHY HE LOOKED?!

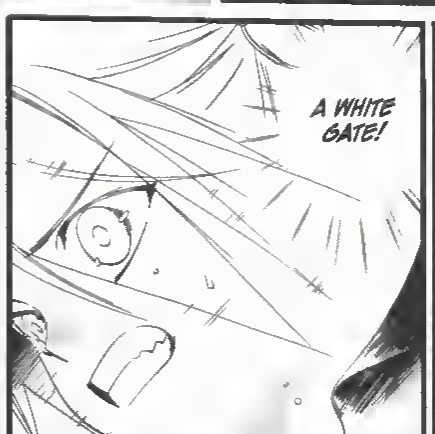

SIGH
HOW IS IT AUTUMN ALREADY?
WHAT WAS IT ALL ABOUT?
WHAT YOU SAID BEFORE
IT'S TOO SOON, YOSHITSUNA!
HIJIRI!
WHAT WAS THAT?
I...
...MET HIM.
BEING A CHILD, I ONLY MEANT WELL. I ALSO PREDICTED THE DEATH OF OUR DOG.
AND EVEN THE DEATH OF THE LADY NEXT DOOR.
THAT'S HOW I BECAME WHO I AM TODAY.
FROM THE START, MY MOTHER HATED CHILDREN SO I CREEPED HER OUT.
AND THAT WAS WHEN ...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING!!
SO THAT'S WHAT HAP-PENED...
AAAH! A BALD SPOT!
YOU WON'T LIKE THIS BUT... I THINK FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, YOU SHOULD SPEND THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IN DRAG.
Like you weren't protective enough already!
JEEZ... HE HASN'T CHANGED AT ALL.
Bald spot
Scissors
?!
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
ジャキ ジョキン
A HAIR-CUT.
SINCE I BEHELD "MISS HIJIRI'S FAIR FORM."
HEH.
HE'S ONE BIZARRE NUTJOB.
IS THAT SO?
WHAT'S UP? ARE YOU NOT FEELING WELL TODAY?
NOOOO.

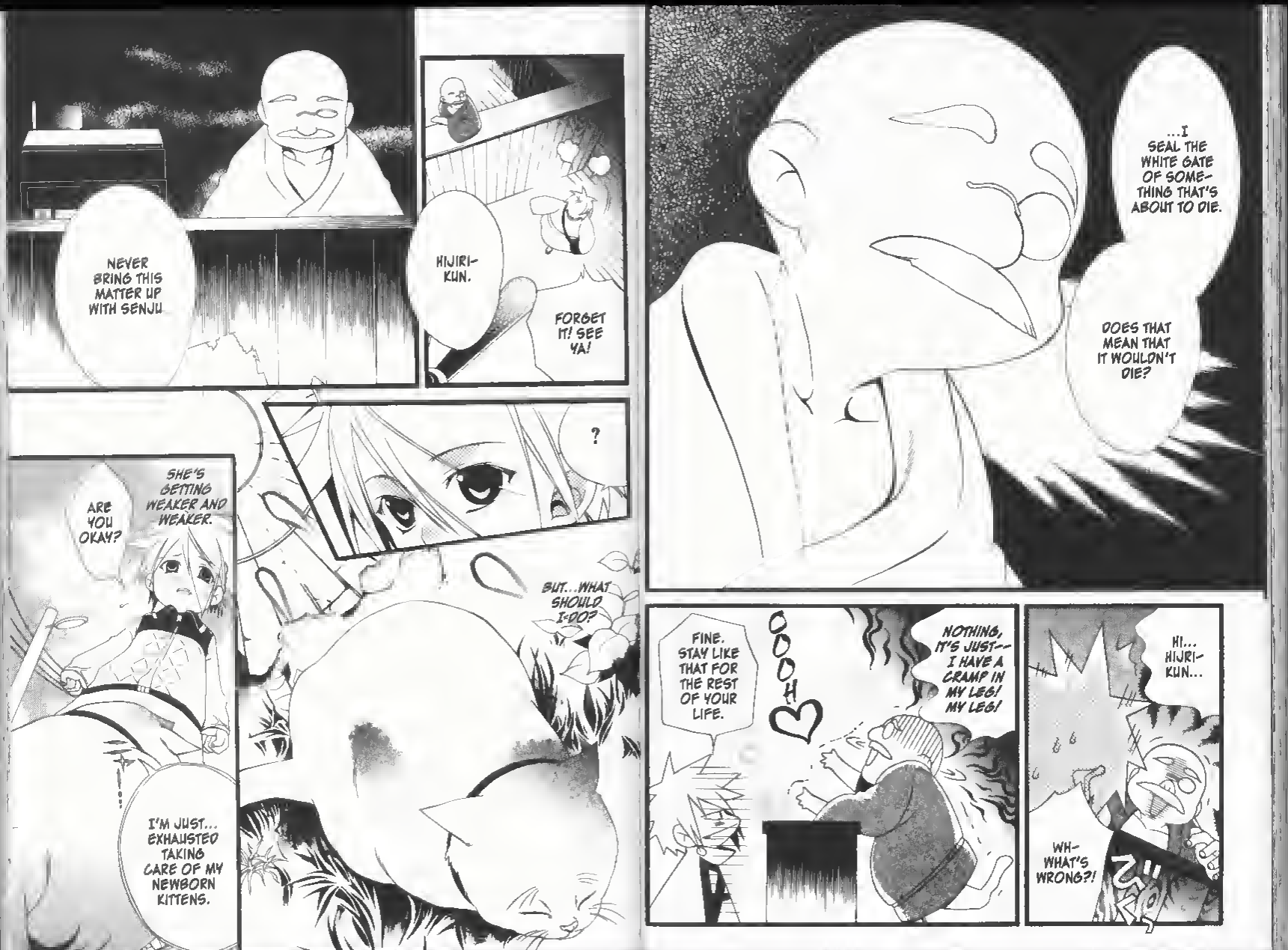
SHE'LL ...
...BE DEAD IN A FEW DAYS!
A WHITE GATE... APPEARS WHEN A LIVING THING IS ABOUT TO DIE.
HOW SAD.


I... I HAVE SOME-THING TO ASK YOU. WHAT IF...
OH, HIJIRI-KUN. WELCOME.
HEY, GRAMPS!

I'VE BEEN FEELING A BIT... SLUGGISH.

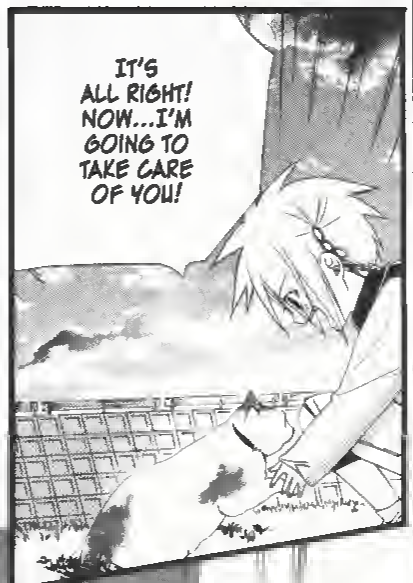

A WHITE GATE!

UH... I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF SOME-THING. LATER!


NEVER BRING THIS MATTER UP WITH SENJU
HIJIRI-KUN.
FORGET IT! SEE YA!
...I SEAL THE WHITE GATE OF SOME-THING THAT'S ABOUT TO DIE.
DOES THAT MEAN THAT IT WOULDN'T DIE?
?
ARE YOU OKAY?
SHE'S GETTING WEAKER AND WEAKER.
I'M JUST... EXHAUSTED TAKING CARE OF MY NEWBORN KITTENS.
BUT...WHAT SHOULD I-DO?
FINE. STAY LIKE THAT FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
OOOH
NOTHING, IT'S JUST-- I HAVE A CRAMP IN MY LEG! MY LEG!
HI... HIJIRI-KUN...
WH-WHAT'S WRONG?!

SILENCE
HM?!

THAT MOODY BASTARD! HE'S USUALLY A HOMEBODY, BUT I DON'T SEE HIM AROUND.
HEY... YOU...
HANG IN THERE!


IT'S ALL RIGHT! NOW...I'M GOING TO TAKE CARE OF YOU!

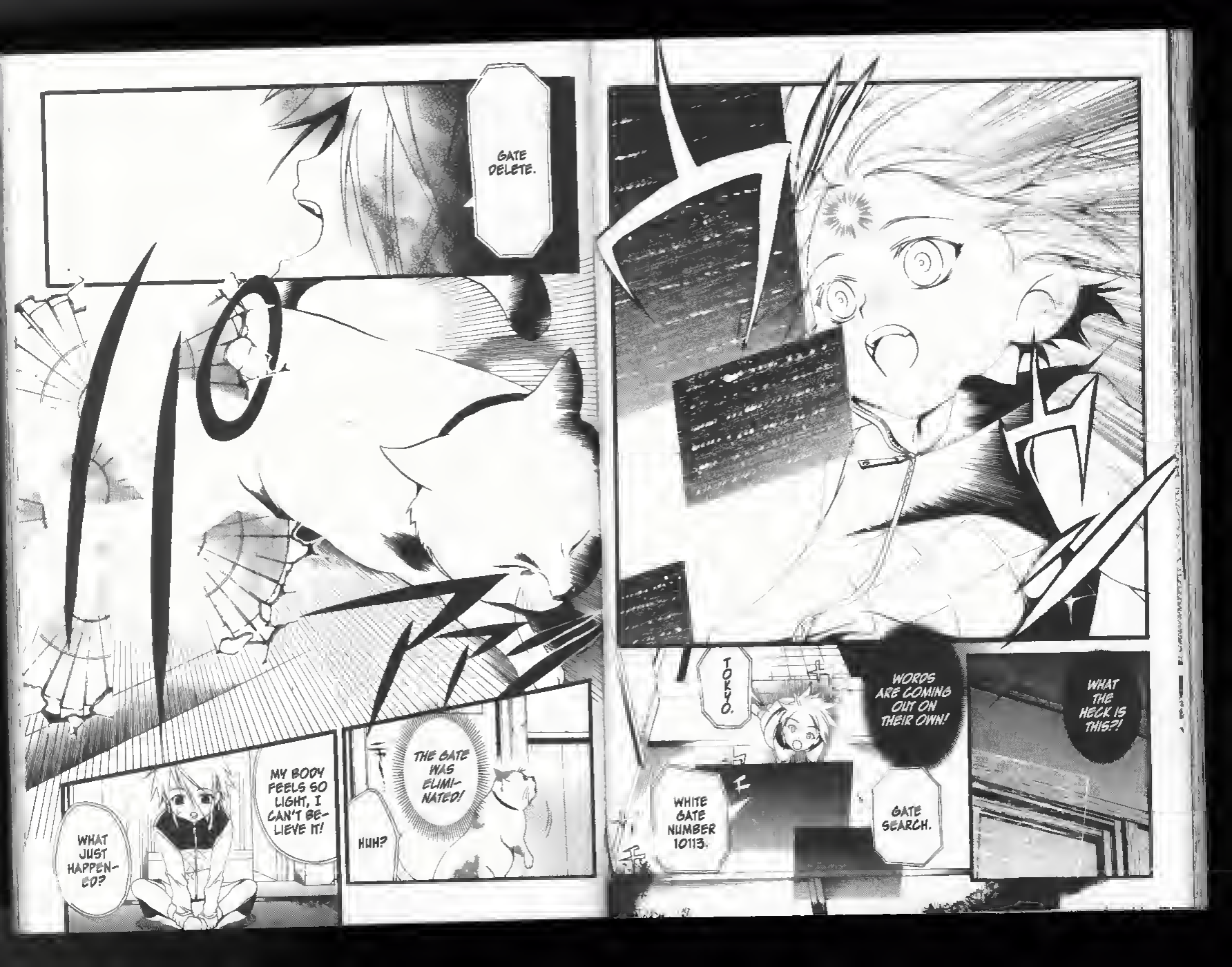
I...
SHE HAS KITTENS TOO!
I WON'T LET HER DIE!

ARE YOU HERE SOME-WHERE?! THIS CAT ...

IF SENJU WERE IN MY PLACE, HE WOULD DEFINITELY SAVE HER!
STEP
STEP
SENJU!
STEP

HIS POWERS AWAKENING. IT WAS JUST A FLUKE.
HE WAS DESPERATE. HIS POWERS GOT TRIGGERED THE SAME WAY SOMEONE CAN GET SUDDEN, SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH WHEN THEY'RE IN DANGER. SAME THING
IF HE'S SO UNTROUBLED ABOUT IT...I GUESS IT'S OKAY TO TELL HIM.
I WANT TO WARN YOU ABOUT SOME-THING.
HIJIRI-KUN TOLD ME HE WANTS TO CLOSE THE GATE OF A CAT THAT'S ABOUT TO DIE.
HE WHAT?!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TRIGGERED HIS POWERS TO AWAKEN BUT...
...BE CAREFUL.
UNDER-STOOD?
HAVE HIJIRI-KUN'S "GATE-KEEPING POWERS" BLOOMED?
MEAN-WHILE...
IF HE REALIZES HIS FULL POWERS, IT WOULD MEAN GREAT DANGER FOR HIJIRI-KUN!!
THE GATE IS IN THE STORAGE ROOM.
YES, A BIT. I NOTICED IT AT THE PARTY.
AND THAT'S OKAY?! WHY ARE YOU SO CALM?
IT'S A FLUKE.
HUH?

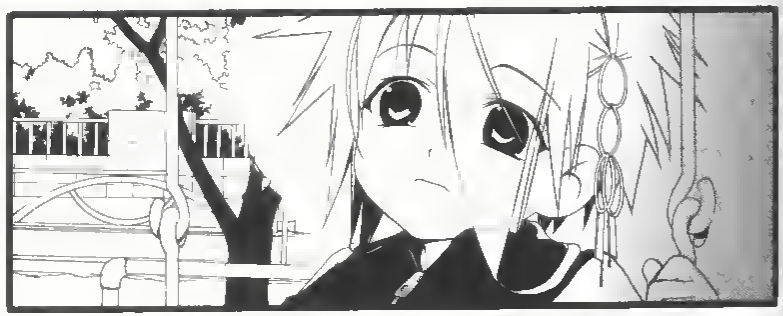
HANG IN THERE!
HEY, YOU!
ANSWER ME!
NO! WHAT ABOUT ~~?
YOU DON'T WANT TO LEAVE YOUR KIDS DO YOU?
CUT IT OUT!
TAKE CARE ...
...OF MY KIT-TENS.
HIJIRI... KUN, THANK... YOU...
SENJU-KUN!
SENJU...

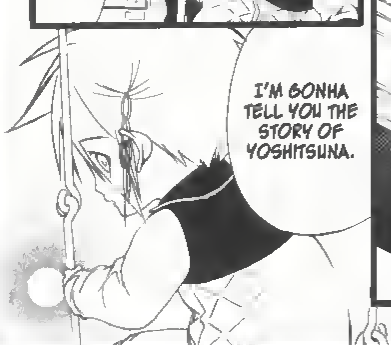

GATE DELETE.
WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
MY BODY FEELS SO LIGHT, I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!
HUH?
THE GATE WAS ELIMINATED!
WHAT THE HECK IS THIS?!
TOKYO.
WHITE GATE NUMBER 10113.
GATE SEARCH.
WORDS ARE COMING OUT ON THEIR OWN!

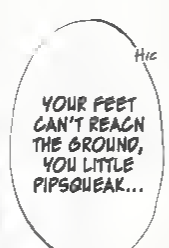
KYOU!
SENJU!
!
OH... THIS CAT?
WELL... UH...I MEAN... SHE WAS ABOUT TO DIE BUT...I SAVED HER!
YOU SEALED A GATE, DIDN'T YOU?
YOU!
SE-SENJU?!
YOU!
GET OUT!
GET OUT.
THAT WAS STUPID OF YOU! DON'T EVER DO THAT AGAIN!

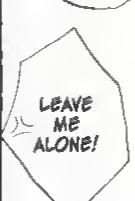
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?
.....
IT'S ALMOST CURFEW. IS IT OKAY TO GO BACK?
GET OUT!
?!
THAT WAS A BIT SCARY.
SENJU'S... MAD AT ME AGAIN.

DAMMIT!
GHOST!
ピカッ
YOU KNOW THE TRUTH, DON'T YOU?
!!
I COULD KEEP HIM OUT OF HARM'S WAY EVEN NOW THAT HIS POWERS HAVE AWAKENED.
IF IT WERE ME...
LISTEN, SENJU.
WHO ARE YOU?!
YOU KNOW THAT HIS POWER IS NO FLUKE, DON'T YOU?
WHAT'S THAT VOICE?

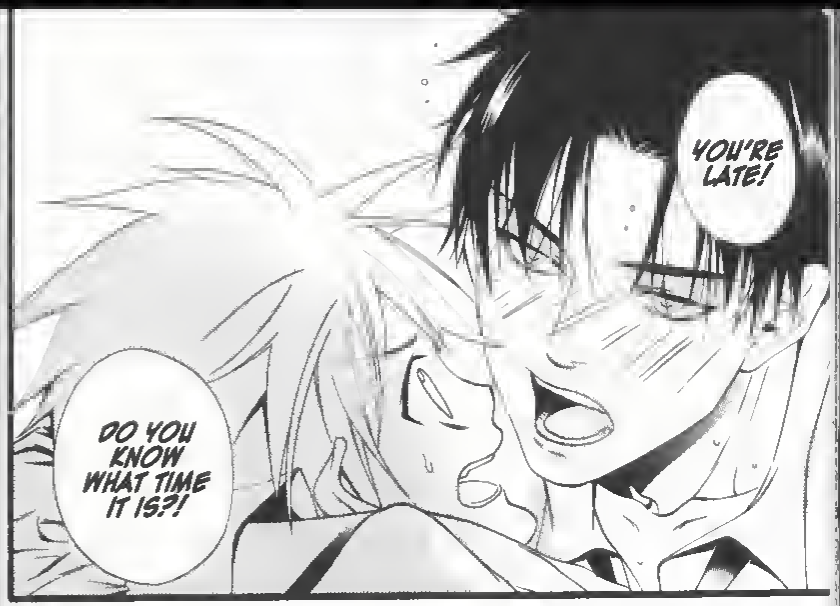


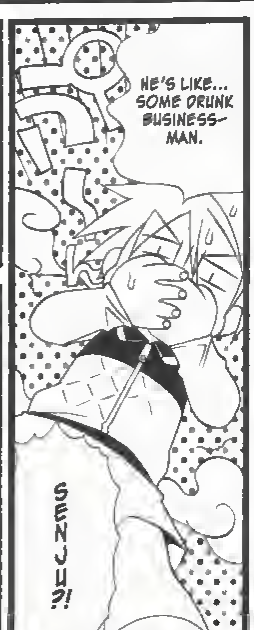






THIS IS WEIRD.





ALL RIGHT. HIJIRI, YOU SEE, YOSHI-TSUNA ...
YOSHITSUNA WAS...PERFECT... AND BEAUTIFUL.
SENJU...
SLAP
I HAVEN'T FINISHED MAKING BREAKFAST. SHAME ON YOU FOR GRABBING FOOD BEFORE IT'S READY!
THAT'S THE KIND OF PERSON HE WAS.
HOW MEAN, SENJU! SLAPPING ME LIKE THAT!
OWWWEE!
BUT THAT'S ALL ABOUT TO CHANGE.
IT'S LONG ...SO LISTEN UP.
YOU ARE, NUH? I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY TIMES I'VE ASKED, AND YOU'VE NEVER TOLD ME.
Ha-ha
YEAH, I GUESS NOT.
IT ALL HAPPENED IN "THAT PLACE" ...
...EVERY-THING TO DO WITH YOUR PARENTS.

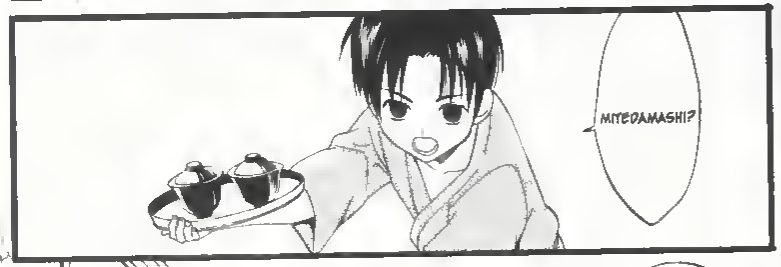
YO! OLDER BROTHER ...AND THE BRAT!
DID YOU BULLY OLDER BROTHER AGAIN? I'M GONNA TELL EVERYBODY SENJU'S A BULLY.
I WASN'T BULLYING ANY-BODY.
Yoshitsuna's Younger Brother, Kikyo
THE YOSHITSUNA THAT TOOK ME IN WAS PERFECT...
...AND BEAUTI-FUL.
I WENT SO FAR AS TO BELIEVE HE WAS A GOD BUT...
GOOD MORNING, EVERY-ONE.
KUZUNOHA-SAN!
SISTER-IN-LAW!
Yoshitsuna's Wife, Kuzunoha
PLEASE STRAIGHTEN YOURSELF UP.
HE'S GOT THE POSTURE OF A BROKEN DOWN BUSINESS-MAN

Senju, 11 Years Old
OH, NO. MY IMAGE OF HIM HAS BEEN SHAT-TERED.
WITNESS THE TRUTH!
Hijiri's Father, Yoshitsuna

YOU'VE GOT A LITTLE PERSON GROWING IN YOUR STOMACH, DON'T YOU?
NO! UMM... IT'S...ALL RIGHT!
Oh me too!
ME TOO
THANK YOU. THANK YOU.
I SURE DO, SENJU! THANK YOU!
THEY'RE OUT OF CONTROL!
Jeez.

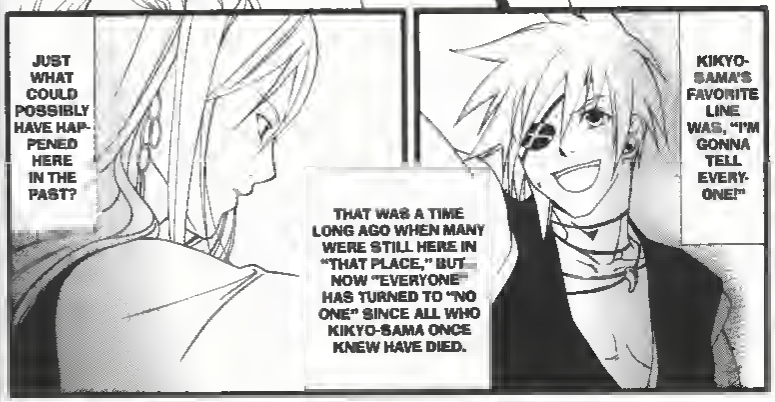
AH.
TRIP
Dive
I...I...
IT'S OKAY, KUZUNOHA-SAN. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, SENJU?
BREAK-FAST IS RUINED...
JEEZ! PLEASE BE CAREFUL, KUZUNOHA-SAMA.
...MORE OR LESS.

EVEN WHEN...
Older brother!
ニィサー
TRIP
I LOVED WATCHING THEM. THEY LOOKED LIKE HEROES, NO MATTER WHAT.
NO MATTER WHAT, THEY ALWAYS LOOKED SO COOL ON THE JOB.


MITEDAMASHI?

Oh, that looks delicious!
I KNOW.
YES. DID YOU KNOW THAT, AS GATEKEEPERS, WE MAINTAIN THE BALANCE OF LIFE AND DEATH IN THE WORLD?

DELETE.
INITIATE GATE RATE OF OCCURRENCE.
ALL RIGHT! LEAVE IT TO ME!
WELL THEN, LET'S GO TO "WORK."


JUST WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HAVE HAPPENED HERE IN THE PAST?
THAT WAS A TIME LONG AGO WHEN MANY WERE STILL HERE IN "THAT PLACE," BUT... NOW "EVERYONE" HAS TURNED TO "NO ONE" SINCE ALL WHO KIKYO-SAMA ONCE KNEW HAVE DIED.
KIKYO-SAMA'S FAVORITE LINE WAS, "I'M GONNA TELL EVERYONE!"

I'M NOT RECKLESS LIKE YOU!
IT'S NOT SO SIMPLE!
I LIKE TO BE SMART AND CAUTIOUS.
DON'T REJECT OUR OFFER SO HASTILY. PLEASE...
...THINK IT OVER CAREFULLY.
THAT SO?
BUT WE NEED TO LOOK OUT FOR "BUGS" IN THE SYSTEM, WHAT WE CALL BLACK GATES...
...WHICH TRY TO DRAW IN THE SOULS OF LIVING HUMANS. THOSE WHO FIND AND SEAL THEM ARE CALLED...
MITEDAMASHI
YOU CAN SEE GATES, CAN'T YOU, SENJU? THAT MAKES YOU THE PERFECT CHOICE TO BE MY ASSISTANT. INTERESTED?
THIS CHILD IS GIFTED. HE CAN SENSE THOSE PEOPLE WHO'RE NEAR DEATH. HOW CREEPY!
PLEASE LET ME THINK ABOUT IT.
I'M GONNA TELL EVERYONE THAT SENJU IS WISHY-WASHY! SERIOUSLY, IT WOULD BE AWESOME TO WORK WITH YOU.

SAY WHAT IT'S IN YOUR HEART, SIMPLY AND DIRECTLY.
THAT SHOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT, SHOULD IT?
I SAID THAT THEY WERE RECKLESS AND ALWAYS ACTED WITHOUT THINKING. I WANT TO APOLOGIZE.
TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH! I...
IT'S--!
I'D BETTER GET YOSHITSUNA OVER HERE!
HUH?
THE... BABY...IS COMING!
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG?

...SPUR OF THE MOMENT OUTBURST.
IT WAS A TOTAL...
OH DEAR, YOU DIDN'T...
...REALLY SAY THAT, DID YOU?
I WISH I HADN'T SAID IT.
SO, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO, SEIJU?
THAT WAS HURTFUL TO BOTH OF THEM, YOU KNOW.
YE... YEAH.
UM...

BLACK GATE
the black gate does not wait for the soul to die
SOUL.5

OPEN!
YOSHITSUNA... YOU'RE PROBABLY AT THE "GREAT TREE OF SOULS" RIGHT NOW.
HOT... WINDS?!
SO HOT!
THE FOREST...
...IS ON FIRE!
THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

THE FOREST IS ON FIRE!
WHAT THE HELL?
HEY-HEY, WE GOT VISITORS.
HOW DID YOU GET IN HERE?

SENJU!
LOOK! IF YOU PLANT THE ENDS OF ONIONS, THEY'LL GROW AGAIN!

I'LL TELL EVERYONE... THAT GUN-WIELDING HUMANS BARGED IN HERE TO THREATEN US.
YOU'RE THE ONLY MITEDA-MASHI?
YOU LED THEM HERE, DIDN'T YOU? WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?
HONOR-ABLE GATE-KEEPER!
WHAT?! ARE YOU INSANE?
PLEASE SEAL... ALL THE WORLD'S GATES.
MY DAUGHTER...
...IS GOING TO DIE SOON.
IF ANY-ONE CAN CHANGE THAT, IT'S YOU. YOU HAVE THE POWER TO ELIMINATE DEATH!
SAVE MY DAUGH-TER!
I BEG YOU!
DO NOT GIVE IN TO YOUR SENSE OF PITY.
IT WOULD NOT BE WISE, KIKYO.
OLDER BROTHER!

IF YOU WOULD ONLY DO THAT, YOU WOULD SAVE MY DAUGHTER'S LIFE.
"A WORLD WITHOUT DEATH."
GATEKEEPERS KNOW THE CODE THAT CAN SEAL ALL THE WORLD'S GATES!
IF YOU WOULD RECITE IT, YOU COULD BANISH DEATH FROM THE WORLD.
RECITE THE CODE!
I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOU!
OR MAYBE IF YOU FEEL PAIN, YOU'LL CHANGE YOUR MIND!
CLICK
...TO LEAVE THIS PLACE NOW.
THIS ISN'T EASY, BUT I MUST ASK YOU...
YOU TOO...

YOU...
I IMPLORE YOU. PLEASE SAVE HER.
YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU?
HONORABLE GATEKEEPER!
YOU KNOW THE "CODE" THAT WOULD SEAL ALL THE WORLD'S GATES!

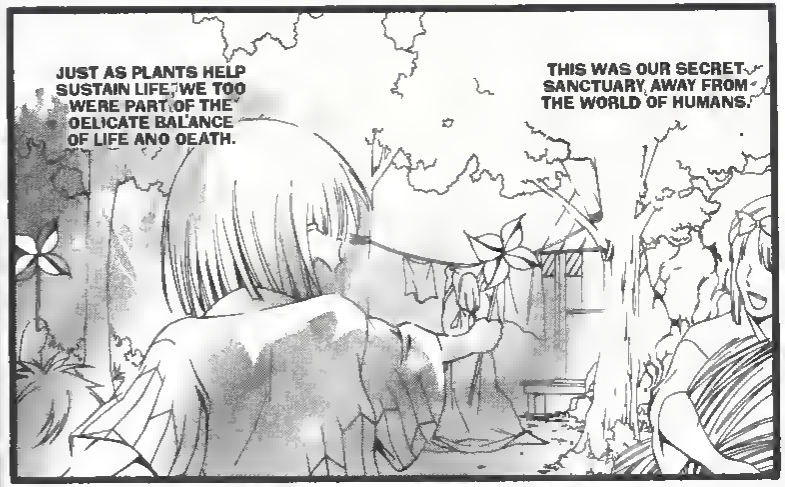
LONG AGO, WE HAD MANY FRIENDS HERE.
BUT THEY WERE MURDERED BY HUMANS LIKE YOU.
I HAVE SUCH PITY FOR YOU ALL...
HOW-EVER...
IF YOU DESTROY WHAT I HOLD SO DEAR...
...I WILL NOT BE SO MERCIFUL.
I'VE OPENED A BLACK GATE RIGHT NEXT TO YOU.
P... PLEASE CEASE YOUR VIOLENCE.
AGHH!
MY HAND... AGHH!
IF YOU CHOOSE TO BE CARELESS, YOU'LL BE AT RISK FROM A GUN EXPLOSION, STRAY BULLETS, OR ANY MANNER OF ACCIDENTS.
I DON'T WANT TO REPEAT "WHAT HAPPENED LONG AGO."
KIKYO, GO TO KUZUNOHA-SAN AND SENJU!
WHAT ALTER-NATIVE DO WE HAVE?
OLDER BRO-THER, DON'T DO IT!

I CAN PERSUADE HUMANS ON MY OWN AND ESCAPE TO THE OUTSIDE.
BUT YOU AND SISTER-IN-LAW MUST BOTH RUN AWAY! IS THAT CLEAR?!
YOU TELL ME TO RUN AWAY BUT...
KUZUNOHA-SAMA IS IN NO CONDITION TO--
AFTER THAT TRAGIC INCIDENT...
...THAT TOOK HIS FRIENDS' LIVES, I DON'T KNOW WHAT HE'LL DO.
AND... WHAT "TRAGIC INCIDENT" ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
I'LL TELL YOU LATER. RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO FIND SISTER-IN-LAW AND GET AWAY!
KIKYO-SAMA! WHAT'S HAPPENING?!
SENJU!
HUMANS HAVE INFILTRATED.
WHAT'S BEHIND THIS? WHAT'S WITH THAT FIRE?!
AWAY? WHY? WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED?!
OLDER BROTHER IS...
...OUT OF HIS MIND.
BUT NEVER MIND THAT NOW. WE'VE GOT TO GET AS FAR AWAY FROM OLDER BROTHER AS WE CAN!

BANG!
SAY THE CODE! IF YOU DON'T...
THE FIRE HAS REACHED THE HOUSE!
SENJU, RUN! IT'S OKAY. RUN AWAY!
UGH!
KUZUNOHA-SAMA!
YOU SEE, LONG AGO, HERE IN THIS PLACE— WE HAD MANY, MANY FRIENDS
WHAT?
HUH?
WHAT KIKYO WAS TELLING YOU...ABOUT YOSHITSUNA LOSING CONTROL.
DOES IT UPSET YOU?
I WON'T LEAVE YOU HERE!

PLEASE!
PLEASE!
YOU COULD ALL GET KILLED OUT HERE!
LISTEN TO ME!
YOU MUST HELP!
HELP!
MY MOTHER...
MY SISTER IS DYING...
YOU AND ALL YOUR FAMI-LIES...
...ARE DOOMED TO DIE.
SORRY.
I'LL SHOOT!
I'LL SHOOT! I REALLY WILL!
TELL US THE CODE!
THERE'S NO GETTING THROUGH TO THEM!

WE, AS GATE-KEEPERS, MUST NEVER LET OUR PERSONAL FEELINGS INTERFERE WITH THE BALANCE OF LIFE AND DEATH.
BUT, FINALLY, YOSHI-TSUNA...
SO, NO MATTER THE DANGER THE HUMANS POSED OR THE HARM THEY CAUSED, WE COULD NOT STRIKE BACK. SO MANY OF US DIED WITHOUT RESISTANCE.
...OPENED A LARGE GATE AND MASSACRED ALL THE HUMANS.


JUST AS PLANTS HELP SUSTAIN LIFE, WE TOO WERE PART OF THE DELICATE BALANCE OF LIFE AND DEATH.
THIS WAS OUR SECRET SANCTUARY, AWAY FROM THE WORLD OF HUMANS.

BUT ONE DAY...HUMANS DISCOVERED THIS PLACE AND TRESPASSED HERE.

"PLEASE HELP BEFORE MY ILLNESS KILLS ME."
THEIR DESPERATE PLEAS WERE ALL ALIKE.
"SAVE THOSE IN MY FAMILY ABOUT TO DIE," THEY WOULD SAY.
BUT THEY GOT ANGRY WHEN WE COULDN'T HONOR THEIR PLEAS, SO THEY KILLED THE GATE-KEEPERS ONE BY ONE.

WAHHH
WAHHH
THE FIRE'S REACHED THE HOUSE! I HAVE TO GET BACK QUICKLY AND HELP KUZUNOHA!
MUST HURRY!
SENJU... WOULD YOU TAKE THIS CHILD TO A SAFE PLACE?
YES! I'LL BE BACK!
WE...WE DID IT!

HE LOVED HIS FRIENDS TOO MUCH TO SEE THEM GETTING KILLED.
THAT KIND SOUL... NO...
YOSHI-TSUNA...
...BABY.
MY...
HUH?
HE'S AL-READY HERE.
THERE'S NO NEED TO WORRY.
HUH... BUT!
THAT WAS THE TRAGIC INCIDENT NOW THAT YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULD RUN AWAY.

EVEN AS THE FLAMES CONSUMED HER, A PEACEFUL SMILE NEVER LEFT KUZUNOHA'S FACE.
...HER BODY NEVER BURNED UP.
INSTEAD, SHE TURNED INTO PURE LIGHT...AND ROSE INTO THE SKY.
SHE WASN'T A NORMAL HUMAN.
AAAAAAAAAAAGH!
HUH?
KUZUNO~~

I WILL...
...PROTECT THIS CHILD.
KIKYO-SAMA! YOSHITSUNA-SAMA!
I HOPE THEY'RE OKAY...
UGH... UGHH...
KUZU-NOHA... SA...
HIC
UGHHH!
KUZUNOHA-SAMA... UGH...
NO...NOT YET... THIS ISN'T THE TIME TO CRY!

THEY'LL... DO ANYTHING TO GET WHAT THEY WANT... HUH? HA HA
KIKYO-SAMA...
TH...
UGHH...
THEY'RE HERE TOO
LET'S CAPTURE THE OTHER GATE-KEEPER ALIVE!
EVEN AFTER THE PUNISH-MENT WE GAVE HIM, HE STILL WOULDN'T GIVE UP THE CODE.
IT'S ALL RIGHT... SHE'S... SAFE.
HOW IS SISTER-IN-LAW?
DON'T SPEAK ..

HA HA! THERE HE IS! THERE'S THE STINKY LITTLE BRAT I KNOW!
LET'S GO! HELP ME OUT!
KIKYO-SAMA... YOU'RE SMILING AND GOOFING AROUND JUST SO YOU WON'T CAUSE ME WORRY.
WHEN YOU LOOK AS BAD AS YOU DO, IT'S HARD TO APOLOGIZE FOR TELLING YOU TO GET IT TOGETHER
IS THIS ALL OF YOU?

ALL RIGHT... THERE'S SOMETHING I HAVE TO DO. MUST STOP...OLDER BROTHER.
THERE'S NO WAY I CAN TELL HIM THE TRUTH.
HM?
KIKYO-SAMA... HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED... SOME-THING?
HAVEN'T YOU NOTICED?
NOTICE WHAT?
I'M NOT A SISSY!
WHY ARE YOU TREM-BLING? I'M GONNA TELL EVERYONE THAT SENJU'S A SISSY.
HM?
I'LL GET YOU TO YOSHI-TSUNA.
HE CAN'T SEE!
Waah
BLIND IN BOTH EYES...

THEY'VE UNDER-ESTIMATED ME.
PLEASE LEAVE THIS PLACE.
I DON'T WISH TO HARM YOU.
YOUR BROTHER REFUSED TO COOPERATE WITH US!
THEN CLOSE THE GATES! WHY WON'T YOU SAY THE CODE?
YOU'RE JUST DEVILS WHO HOLD SWAY OVER LIFE AND DEATH!
KIKYO...
WHAT DID YOU DO TO HIM?

THERE ARE SO MANY OF YOU GATHERED HERE.
STOP RESISTING! EVEN WITH YOUR POWERS, YOU WON'T ESCAPE UNHURT AGAINST OUR NUMBERS!
SAY THE CODE!

THE LAST TIME, AND EVEN NOW...I'VE SHOWN MERCY IN THE FACE OF SUCH MADNESS AND FURY. SO IT HAS COME TO THIS.
GRRR!!
GAH!!
I...
...WAS NAÏVE.

GET AWAY, SENJU!
SOME-THING'S... SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT!
WHAT'S HAPPENING? I CAN SENSE THE AIR WHIP-PING AROUND VIOLENTLY!
IT'S TOO DAN-GEROUS FOR YOU!
SILENCE
AGHHHH!
YOSHI-TSUNA!
HELP!
KIKYO... AND... SENJU?
DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!

KI-KIKYO-SA...
OLDER BROTHER AND... SISTER-IN-LAW AND... THEIR NEWBORN BABY...
OR I'LL SAY YOU'RE A CRYBABY.
I'M GONNA TELL EVERY-ONE.
KIKYO-SAMA...
UGH... UGHH
YOU... DON'T NEED TO BE SCARED ANY-MORE.
DON'T CRY, SENJU. EVERY-THING'S GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT.
UGHHH.
STOP CRYING.

PERFECT AND BEAUTIFUL...
I THOUGHT OF HIM AS A GOD...
HE TRIED TO SHIELD KIKYO AND ME.
IT WAS HIS BLOOD-STAINED HAIR.

KIKYO-SAMA!
I COULDN'T SAY IT.
KIKYO-SAMA.
I DON'T WANT TO SAY GOODBYE!
I STILL... CAN'T SAY IT... BEFORE, I SAID SUCH A TERRIBLE THING AND I WANT TO APOLOGIZE...
HUH?
KIKYO ...

BLACK GATE™

the black gate does not wait for the soul to die

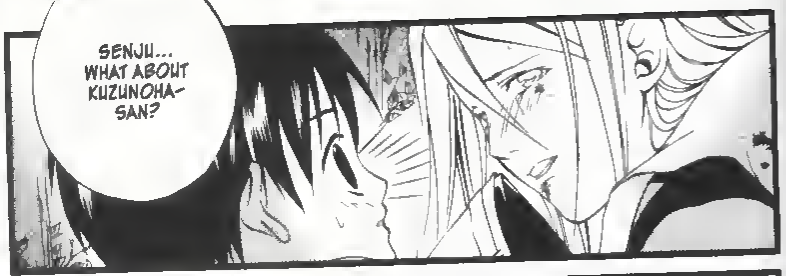
PERFECT AND BEAUTIFUL...

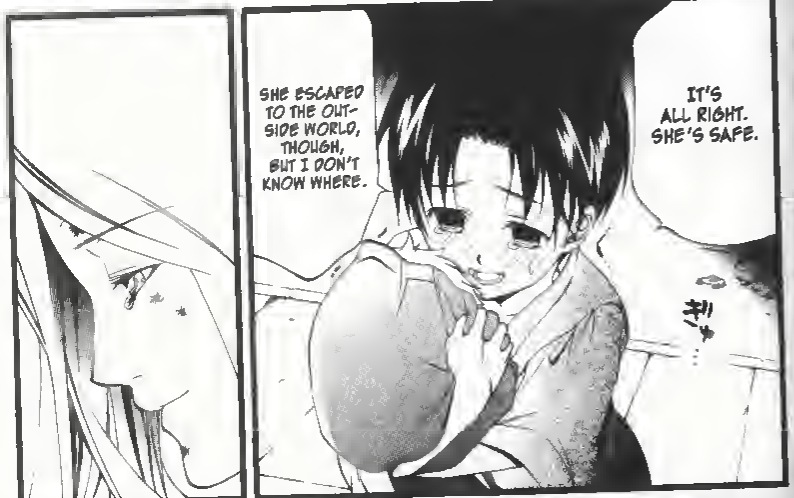
I THOUGHT OF HIM AS A GOD...

IT WAS HIS BLOOD-STAINED HAIR.

SOUL.6

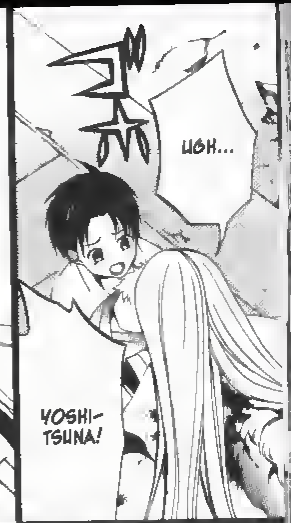
KUZUNOHA-SAN...GAVE EVERYTHING SHE HAD.
HE'S HERE.
SENJU.
YOU SHOULD TOO.
DRIP
YOSHI-TSUNA...
...SAMA?


SENJU... WHAT ABOUT KUZUNOHA-SAN?


IT'S ALL RIGHT. SHE'S SAFE.
SHE ESCAPED TO THE OUT-SIDE WORLD, THOUGH, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHERE.

YOU'RE NOT TOO GOOD... AT LYING...
HUH?

KIKYO?
IT'S ALL RIGHT. DON'T WORRY. IN FACT...


UGH...
YOSHI-TSUNA!

UGH!
KIKYO?
KIKYO?
KIKYO?

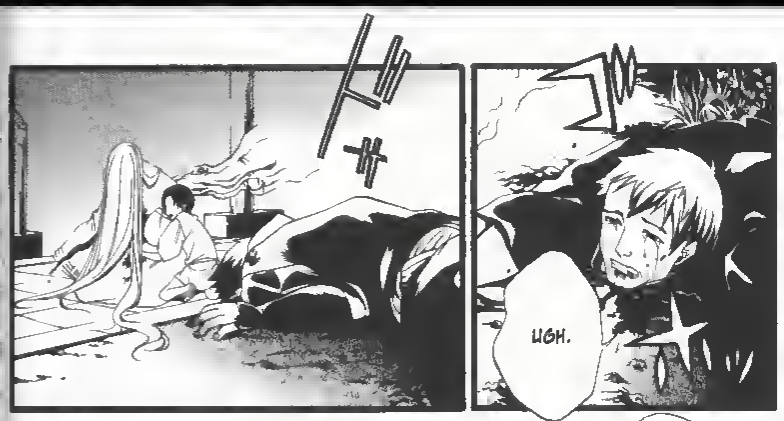
SWEET AND KIND.
THAT WAS THE REAL YOSHITSUNA.
HIS SHOULDERS SHOOK AS HE SOBBED.
YOSHI-TSUNA...

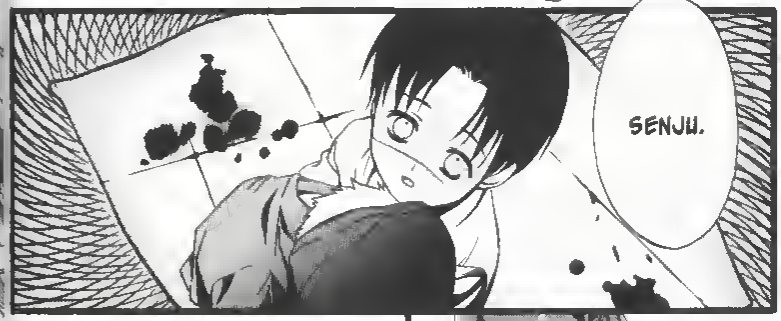
HUH?
WHY IS IT SO CRUEL?
DEATH...
!!
YOSHITSUNA?
HUH?

TRANSFER.
TRANSFER WHAT?
I AM THE LEADER OF THE GATE-KEEPERS.
AND THE POWER OF THE LEADER HAS BEEN PASSED DOWN TO THIS CHILD.
...TO SHOW KIKYO-SAMA YOUR CHILD, DON'T YOU?
YOU WANT...
YES.
WHEN THE TIME COMES, HIS POWERS WILL NATURALLY BLOOM.
THIS CHILD WILL BE CALLED *HIJIRI*. I HAVE TRANSFERRED ALL OF MY POWERS TO HIM.

IS THIS... DEATH?
BANG
BANG
BANG
YOSHI-TSUNA!
I'M... ...ALL RIGHT.
YOSHI-TSUNA LOOKS...
HUFF
HUFF
IT'S... ALL RIGHT.
HUFF
HUFF
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
HOW COULD YOU... EVERY-ONE!
HUFF
I'VE TRANS-FERRED ALL MY POWERS TO HIJIRI.
HUFF
SO... I AM POWER-LESS.
HUFF
YOSHI-TSUNA!
RUN... AWAY...

SUCH... MERCILESS... CRUELTY.
POS-SESSED OF SUCH IMMENSE TERROR.
I DIDN'T KNOW...HOW FRIGHTENING... I THINK I'M GOING...MAD.
SU... SU... SUCH...
HAPPENING EVERYDAY IN THE WORLD.
I DIDN'T UNDER-STAND UNTIL DEATH CALLED FOR ME.
YOSHI-TSUNA!
I... DIDN'T KNOW.
I...
I...

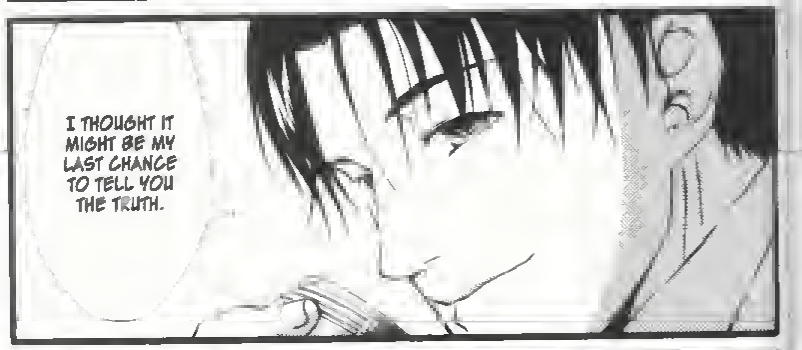

UGH.

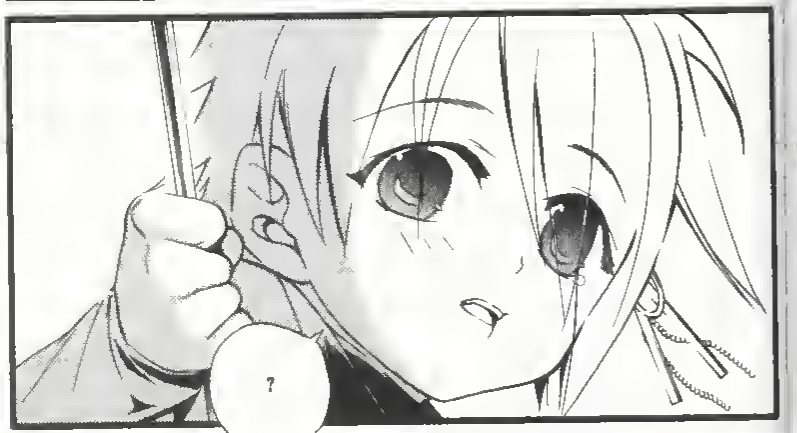

SENJU.

HOW... TERRIBLE.
I NEVER KNEW... WHAT "DEATH" WAS.
HOW...DO I...LOOK? HEH HEH.
I NEVER KNEW...BEING SHOT BY A GUN...HURT SO MUCH. I NEVER KNEW...

...LIVE YOUR LIFE...
YOU SHOULD...
...LIVE AS YOU DESIRE.
I REACHED OUT A HAND TO TOUCH HIS HAIR, BUT CAUGHT ONLY AIR INSTEAD.
HE...
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF
DON'T BE SCARED!
SNIFF...
MY LIFE...HAS REACHED ITS END.
IT'S ALL RIGHT, YOSHITSUNA!
ギュッ
DON'T BE SCARED!
DON'T BE SCARED!

HM?
WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO TELL ME ALL THIS... NOW?


I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE MY LAST CHANCE TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH.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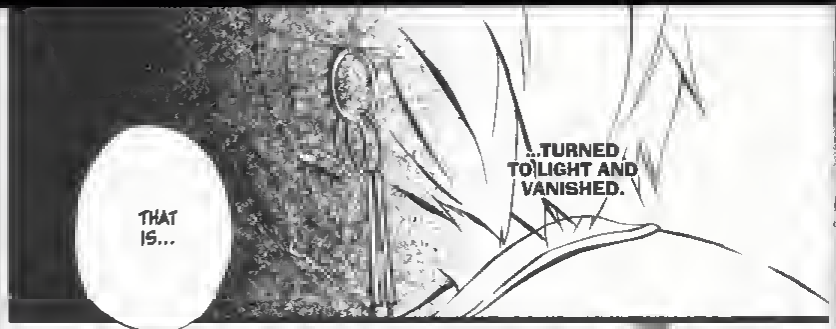
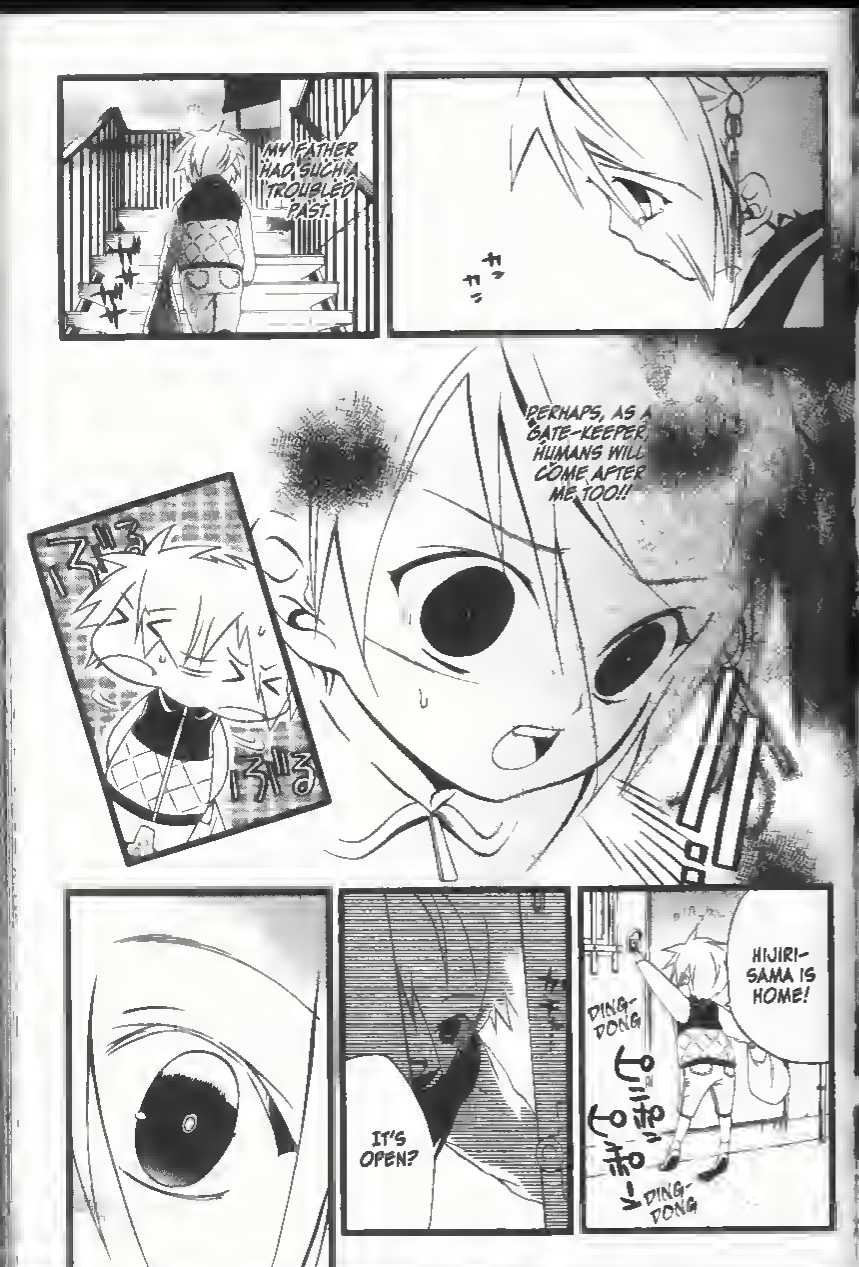

THAT IS...
...TURNED TO LIGHT AND VANISHED.

EVERY-THING... ABOUT YOUR PARENTS' FINAL MOMENTS.
...WHAT I KNOW.

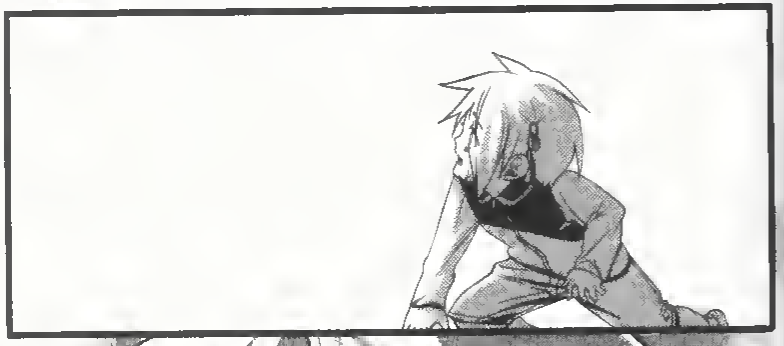
SNIFF
SNIFF

JEEZ. I GUESS I'VE GOT NO CHOICE.
WHAT A JERK! KICKING A GUY WHEN HE'S DOWN IN THE DUMPS.
I'M HEADING BACK, SO GO GET US BREAKFAST AND BRING IT HOME.
WELL, I'M DONE TELLING MY STORY.
WHAT'RE YOU DOING, YOU DRUNK?!
DON'T LOOK SO GLUM!
IS IT ALL RIGHT FOR YOSHITSUNA TO LAUGH AT YOU?
WHOA!
WHAT THE HELL?!
ALL RIGHT!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING.
YOU'D NEVER KNOW HE WAS TWELVE BY LOOKING AT HIM.
REALLY... I THOUGHT HE'D ALWAYS BE A LITTLE BRAT.
SURE WAS QUICK.
TWELVE, HUH? SURE WAS QUICK!
BUT...


MY FATHER HAD SUCH A TROUBLED PAST.
PERHAPS, AS A GATE-KEEPER, HUMANS WILL COME AFTER ME, TOO!!
IT'S OPEN?
DING-DONG
DING-DONG
HIJIRI-SAMA IS HOME!

IT'S TOO SOON.
UNTIL THE VERY END...HE'LL ALWAYS BE MY LITTLE BRAT, WON'T HE?
HIJIRI.

YOU LEFT ME HERE... ALONE?
WHERE DID YOU GO?
Live as you desire.
HE STILL HASN'T COME HOME YET? WEIRD.
!
NIS MITEOAMASNI BEADS AREN'T WHERE HE ALWAYS KEEPS THEM.
I THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE MY LAST CHANCE TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING.
IF I THINK ABOUT IT, I UNDERSTAND BUT...
... ALWAYS BEARING THE BURDEN ON HIS OWN.
WHY DIDN'T I SEE IT BEFORE? HE'S...
SE... N...
SENJU!
SENJU, WHERE'D YOU GO?
SENJU! COME OUT!
WHAT'RE YOU UP TO NOW?!
SENJU! SENJU!



YOU'RE FAMILY...

WHO'S THE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING?
COULD YOU REALLY BE HIS SON?
HIJIRI, THAT'S WHO!
YOU SAID, "LAST."
DON'T DO THIS!
WHAT'RE YOU DOING THIS FOR?!

SEN--

はぁ...
はぁ...

SUCH!
SENCH!

THAT GUY WITH HIS HAIR ALL PARTED IN THE MIDDLE ...
WHAT-EVER IT IS, I DON'T CARE.
WHOA!
AGHHH! STOP IT!
IT'S A HAIRCUT!
.....
YOU HAIR'S GOTTEN LONG. WHY DON'T YOU CUT IT?
I'M GREAT!
HIJIRI-KUN... ARE YOU OKAY?
AUTUMN TURNED TO WINTER AND SOON THE SPRING CAME... AND STILL, SENJU DID NOT RETURN.
HIJIRI-KUN... HE HASN'T COME IN LATELY.
HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING TO ANYONE? I WONDER WHAT HE COULD BE UP TO?
THERE'S NOTHING FOR IT. SENJU'S GONE FOR GOOD.
...AND FAMILY IS PRECIOUS.

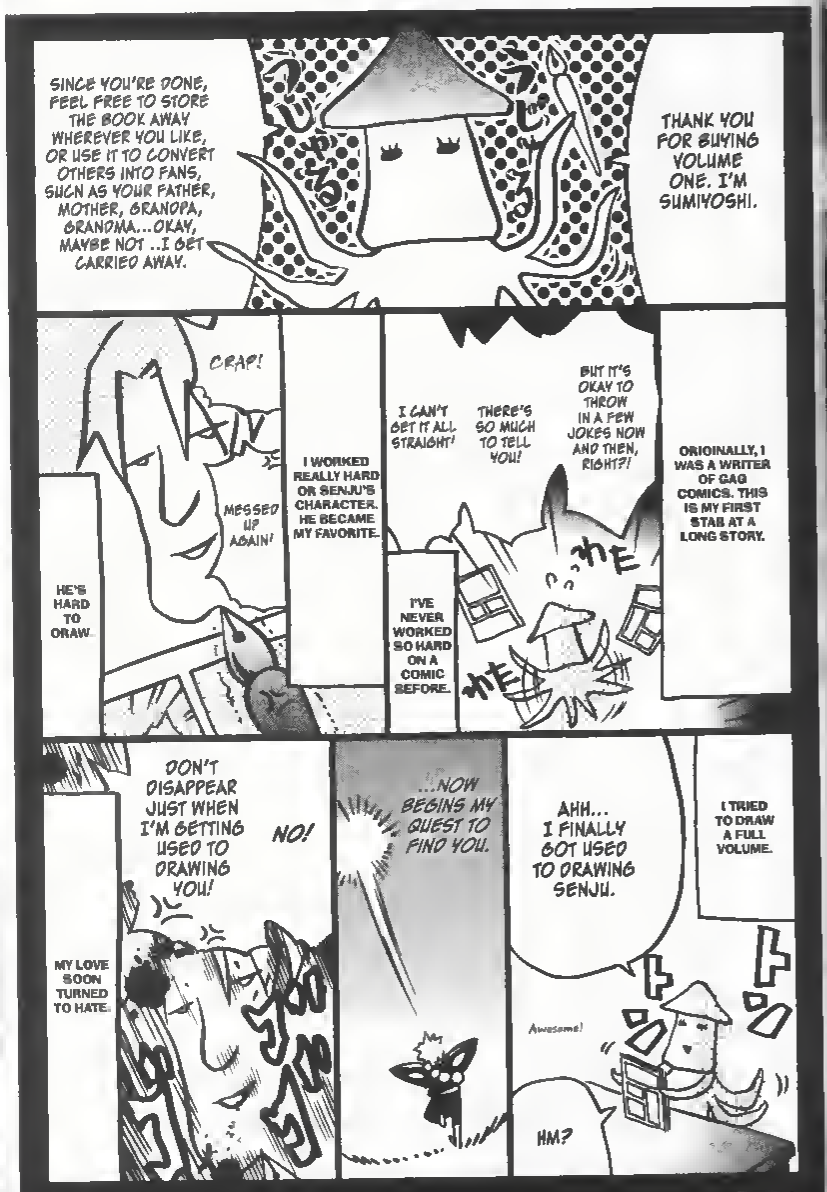
EVEN UNDERESTIMATE ME.
I DON'T NEED YOUR PROTECTION. I CAN PROTECT MYSELF.
GRAMPS! HAND ME SOME SCISSORS!
?
EXCEPT TO SAY THAT HE SERIOUSLY UNDERESTIMATED ME.
IT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH SENJU OR WHATEVER HE THOUGHT ABOUT ME.
I'LL BE KILLED RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIS EYES. SO THERE'S SOMETHING I'VE GOT TO DO.
IF MY GATE-KEEPER ABILITIES ARE AWAKENED, MY FATHER'S TRAGEDY WILL ALSO BE MINE.
AND, GUESS WHAT, SENJU? I DON'T NEED YOU ANYMORE.

...HE WILL RETURN.
YEAH?
NEVER MIND THE ATTITUDE. OLD MAN HAZAMA'S LOOKING FOR YOU.
HEY, HIJIRI!

NO MORE CHILDISHNESS.
I'M...
HIJIRI-KUN?! YOUR HAIR...
GRAMPS! TEACH ME THE WAYS OF THE MITEDAMASHI!
HUH?
I'M GOING TO BECOME A MITEDAMASHI FAR SUPERIOR TO SENJU.
AND SENJU WILL SAY, "I'M SORRY I LOOKED DOWN ON YOU, HIJIRI-SAMA."
AND HE WILL BOW BEFORE ME IN APOLOGY.
IF I CAN DO THAT...

...MY ONLY FAMILY.
SINCE I WAS BORN, YOU'VE BEEN WITH ME EVERY DAY. YOU ARE..
YOU ARE MY "WORLD."
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TAUGHT ME ALL I KNOW ABOUT THIS WORLD.
I...
I FORGOT.
OH...
JUST YOU WAIT!
GET READY, SENJU!

Afterword


SINCE YOU'RE DONE, FEEL FREE TO STORE THE BOOK AWAY WHEREVER YOU LIKE, OR USE IT TO CONVERT OTHERS INTO FANS, SUCH AS YOUR FATHER, MOTHER, GRANDPA, GRANDMA...OKAY, MAYBE NOT ..I GET CARRIED AWAY.
THANK YOU FOR BUYING VOLUME ONE. I'M SUMIYOSHI.
CRAP!
MESSED UP AGAIN!
HE'S HARD TO DRAW.
I WORKED REALLY HARD ON SENJU'S CHARACTER. HE BECAME MY FAVORITE.
I CAN'T GET IT ALL STRAIGHT!
THERE'S SO MUCH TO TELL YOU!
BUT IT'S OKAY TO THROW IN A FEW JOKES NOW AND THEN, RIGHT?!
I'VE NEVER WORKED SO HARD ON A COMIC BEFORE.
ORIGINALLY, I WAS A WRITER OF GAG COMICS. THIS IS MY FIRST STAB AT A LONG STORY.
DON'T DISAPPEAR JUST WHEN I'M GETTING USED TO DRAWING YOU!
NO!
MY LOVE SOON TURNED TO HATE.
...NOW BEGINS MY QUEST TO FIND YOU.
AHH... I FINALLY GOT USED TO DRAWING SENJU.
I TRIED TO DRAW A FULL VOLUME.
Awesome!
HM?

NOW BEGINS MY QUEST TO FIND YOU.
Next Quest Volume 1 END

I GOT IT! I'LL HAVE HIM TRANSFORM!
Hou
I'd gone through so much trouble to design his outfit
I COULDN'T HAVE SENJU POP INTO THE BATHROOM TO CHANGE WHENEVER THERE WAS AN INCIDENT. WHAT TO DO?
THAT WAS A PROBLEM FROM THE BEGINNING.
YOU'RE FAMILY, AND FAMILY IS PRECIOUS.
YOU THINK I'D RISK MY LIFE IF YOU WEREN'T STILL ALIVE?!
AND THEN...
TRANS-FORMATION.
THE IMAGE IS HOW I IMAGINED IT.
THIS IS HOW I ALWAYS DRAW – FRANTICALLY! I HOPE YOU LOOK FORWARD TO VOLUME TWO!
WHAT IS THIS? THAT IS ONE GOD-AWFUL TRANSFORMATION!
ばば
ばば

IT WAS A TIME OF NON-STOP ALL-NIGHTERS AND ASSOLUTE EXHAUSTION.
IT'S ALL RIGHT!
Fifth day of staying indoors
HEH HEH... THAT SUN IS SO BRIGHT AND HARSH. AM I TURNING INTO A VAMPIRE?
WORKING ON THE SERIES TOOK UP ALL MY TIME.
I'LL MAKE IT IN TIME, WON'T I?
YES, YES, IT'S ALL RIGHT.
ANOTHER MATTER TO THINK THROUGH WAS...
He changes clothes
HERO'S TRANSFORM-MATION.
I WOULD HAVE CONVER-SATIONS WITH THE CHAR-ACTERS.
KEEP FIGHTING, HIJIRI! I'LL KEEP FIGHTING TOO!
Assistant-chan
AND YOU WILL BOW BEFORE ME IN APOLOGY.
I'M GOING TO BECOME A MITE-DAMASHI PAR SUPERIOR TO SEN-JU!

Afterword ■End■